3 1761 06416952 7

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/milezolanoveli00vizeuoft

ÉMILE ZOLA

227

ÉMILE ZOLA

NOVELIST AND REFORMER

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE & WORK

BY ERNEST ALFRED VIZETELLY

ILLUSTRATED BY PORTRAITS, VIEWS,
& FAC-SIMILES

JOHN LANE: THE BODLEY HEAD
LONDON & NEW YORK · MDCCCCIV

Copyright, 1904
By JOHN LANE

PQ
2528
V6

640336
14.8.56.

THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE, MASS., U. S. A.

TO HIS MEMORY

" *If, upon your side, you have the testimony of your conscience, and, against you, that of the multitude, take comfort, rest assured that time will do justice.*" — DIDEROT

PREFACE

This book is an attempt to chronicle the chief incidents in the life of the late Émile Zola, and to set out the various aims he had in view at different periods of a career which was one of the most strenuous the modern world has known. Virtually all his work is enumerated in the following pages, which, though some are given to argument and criticism, will be found crowded with facts. The result may not be very artistic, but it has been partially my object to show what a tremendous worker Zola was, how incessantly, how stubbornly, he practised the gospel which he preached. An attempt has been made also to show the growth of humanitarian and reforming passions in his heart and mind, passions which became so powerful at last that the "novelist" in Zola seemed as nothing. Yet I do not think I can be charged with having neglected the literary side of his career. It is that which bulks most largely in the present volume, and that I think is as it should be; for while Zola was certainly, and in some respects essentially, a Reformer, the pen was the weapon with which he strove to effect his purposes.

Designed more particularly for British and American readers, the book contains some passages which I should have abbreviated — omitted perhaps — if I had been addressing a French audience. And some subjects, which, in that case, I might have treated more fully, have here been dealt with briefly. For instance, though I have enumerated all the plays that Zola wrote, and most of those founded by others on his works, I have not entered into any real discussion of his views respecting the stage, or of his indirect influence on it in France. I have thought it sufficient to indicate that such influence was exercised. A full examination of Zola's relations with the stage would have materially increased the length of a work which is long already, and which I have been anxious to keep within the scope of one volume — a desire which has made my task more difficult than it would have been had I used my materials in all their fulness. But I am distinctly of opinion that biographies in several volumes have nowadays little chance of surviving, even for a moderate number of years.

With respect to Zola's share in the Dreyfus case everybody will recognise, I think, how difficult it is to narrate the doings of any one individual in such an intricate *mêlée* without constant reference to the other combatants and explanation of the many points at issue. Nevertheless, though I fully recognise that the deliverance of Captain Dreyfus was not effected by Zola only, that many other able and whole-hearted men co-operated in that great achievement, I have endeavoured to disentangle Zola's share in the battle from that of the others, saying of them only what has seemed to me strictly necessary to explain his actions. I mention this in order that none may think me unjust towards Zola's fellow-fighters. And though in some introductory pages I have endeavoured to indicate the primary causes of the Affair, such as I think them to have been, in the hope that the reader may be better able to understand the fury of the fray, I have not plunged into a discussion of the Affair itself. Besides, M. Dreyfus's case is now once more before the Cour de Cassation, and reserve on a variety of matters has therefore become advisable. Further, for some years already, a far abler pen than mine, wielded by one of far greater authority, M. Joseph Reinach, has been retracing the many episodes of the Affair, and one may take it, I think, that "L'Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus" will not end without casting light even on matters which may still seem obscure.

In one of my chapters I mention an episode in Zola's private life, which is already known to so many people that it would have been ridiculous on my part to have attempted to conceal it, even if it had been right to do so. I will not enlarge on the subject here, for it is discussed in its proper place; I will merely reiterate my conviction that if a biographer may well be kind to the virtues and a little blind to the errors of a man he has loved it is nevertheless his duty to his readers to omit nothing that may be essential for a right understanding of the man's life.

Further, in another section of the book, I have recounted the incidents of the prosecution instituted against my father with respect to certain translations of Zola's novels. And in this connection I have had occasion to say something about certain fanatics, and also about the attitude of the majority of the British newspaper press before it realised that Zola was not so black as it had painted him. Even after the lapse of long years, such matters and their consequences cannot be recalled by one who suffered by them without some feeling of resentment. It is true that in my preface to the English version of Zola's last book I expressed my acknowledgments to the press generally for the leniency, patience, and even favour that had been shown to me from the time I began to re-introduce Zola's works to the British public. Those acknowledgments I am quite ready to reiterate, in despite of the matters with which I deal in a chapter of the present book, for those matters belong to an earlier period. But a sense of duty and justice to my father, to my brothers and other relatives, to myself as well, has made it impossible for me to overlook the period in question, and what I regard largely as its aberrations. Besides, in a book intended for English readers, it is only fit that the attitude of the English public towards Zola should be dealt with.

Most of the illustrations accompanying my text are from photographs, several of them taken specially for this book; but I have to express my acknowledgments to the proprietors of the *Illustrated London News* for their kind permission to reproduce various views of the rooms in which much of Zola's life was spent.

E. A. V.

Merton, Surrey
March, 1904

CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE
I Introductory — The Zola Family — Birth of Émile Zola 1
II Early Years: 1840–1860 24
III Bohemia — Drudgery — First Books: 1860–1866 53
IV In the Furnace of Paris: 1866–1868 . . 80
V The First "Rougon-Macquarts": 1868–1872 109
VI The Path of Success: 1872–1877 140
VII The Advance of Naturalism: 1877–1881 . . 166
VIII The Battle Continued: 1881–1887 . . . 206
IX The British Pharisees: 1884–1893 . . . 242
X The Last "Rougon-Macquarts" — The French Academy — A Visit to London: 1888–1893 300
XI A Critical Glance: 1893 342
XII The Man — His Life Drama — A New Departure: 1893–1897 390
XIII The Dreyfus Case: 1894–1900 419
XIV Last Years — Death: 1901–1902 493
XV Conclusion — The Influence and Survival of Zola's Works 527

APPENDIX

A. — Declaration of Zola's birth 541
B. — Declaration of his death . . . .
C. — Note on some English translations of his novels

INDEX 547

ÉMILE ZOLA

NOVELIST AND REFORMER

I

INTRODUCTORY

THE ZOLA FAMILY—BIRTH OF ÉMILE ZOLA

The meaning of "Zola"—Localities of that name—The Zola family of Brescia and Venice—Giovanni Battista Zola, saint and martyr—The Abate Giuseppe Zola and his chequered career—The military Zolas of Venice—Benedetta Kiariaki and her offspring—Francesco, father of Émile Zola—His military training—He becomes an engineer and plans one of the first "railways" in Europe—His service in the French Foreign Legion and its strange ending—He plans new docks for the port of Marseilles—His schemes for fortifying Paris and providing Aix in Provence with water—He meets Françoise Émilie Aubert—His romantic courtship and marriage—His home in the Rue St. Joseph, Paris—Birth of Émile Zola—Literature in England, America, and France in 1840—The birth of Émile Zola followed by that of Alphonse Daudet—Contrasting characteristics of those writers.

It has been contended, with some plausibility, that the Italian word *zola* is simply a variant of *zolla*, which means, in a restricted sense, a clod or lump of earth, and, in a broader one, the glebe or soil. This circumstance has suggested to certain detractors of Émile Zola and his writings the scornful remark that he was at least well named, having been, indeed, of the earth earthy. Others have retorted, however, that he may well have taken pride in such association, for, far from disowning his Mother Earth, he acknowledged and proclaimed her beneficence, showed himself her worthy son, and a true and zealous brother to all compounded of her clay. In the course of the present memoir it will become necessary to examine the blame and praise so freely showered upon Zola by his enemies and his admirers; but this can be done irrespective of any such fanciful consideration as the alleged meaning of his name. All discussion of that meaning may be left to philologists and those who are superstitiously inclined to detect predestination in nomenclature. At the same time, it may be as well to point out that the name of Zola is borne by several localities in Northern Italy. For instance, there are two villages so called in Lombardy, — one near Palestro in the province of Pavia, and another in the Valle di sotto, province of Sondrio. In the Emilia, moreover, towards Bologna, there is the small but ancient township of Zola-Predosa, which takes its name from two castellanies united early in the fourteenth century. And as far south as Tuscany, in the province of Florence, one finds a village called Zola incorporated in the Comune di Terra del Sole, and yet another which is named Zola di Modigliana. If, as is possible, the family to which Émile Zola belonged derived its patronymic from some specific locality, this may well have been one of the Lombardian Zolas; for though all the published accounts of the great novelist's progenitors associate them chiefly with Venice, it is certain that they were long connected with Brescia, Lombardy's fairest city, and one which passed for a time under Venetian rule.

The first notable Zola of whom some account has been preserved was a certain Giovanni Battista, born at Brescia between 1570 and 1580. Educated for the Church, he joined the Society of Jesus, and, in or about 1600, proceeded to Goa as a missionary. From India he made his way to Japan, whither St. Francis Xavier and others, following Mendez Pinto, had carried the cross half a century earlier. Remarkable success attended the first endeavours of the

Jesuit missionaries among the Japanese, but their principles were incompatible with tolerance. Throwing caution to the winds, they dictated when they should have been content to teach and persuade, destroyed native shrines, and plotted with disaffected nobles, in such wise that Christianity, after recruiting, it is said, some two hundred thousand adherents in the realm of the Rising Sun, was placed under interdict by the Emperor. Terrible slaughter ensued, and among those who perished at the hands of the Shintoists and Buddhists was the zealous Giovanni Battista Zola. In our own times, under the pontificate of Pius IX, he was placed, like the other holy martyrs of Japan, among the saints of the Roman Catholic Church.

At the confluence of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, another Zola, likewise a Churchman, rose to a position of some eminence. This was the Abate Giuseppe Zola, born in 1739 at Concesio, near Brescia, in which city he became successively librarian, professor of morals, and rector of the university. But he was a man of broad views, one whose dream was to reform and rejuvenate the Church — even like Abbé Pierre Froment in Émile Zola's "Lourdes" and "Rome." In 1771 the theological views professed by Giuseppe Zola brought him into conflict with his Bishop and the Jesuits. He was forced to quit the university; a three-volume work which he had written on the early Christians prior to Constantine and two volumes of his theological lectures were denounced to the Congregation of the "Index expurgatorius"; and — in this instance also like Abbé Pierre Froment — he journeyed to Rome in the hope of justifying himself. In the end — once more anticipating Abbé Pierre — he had to make his submission. Then, for three years, he remained at Rome, teaching morals; but the influence of his enemies, the Jesuits, was waning, and not long after the promulgation of Ganganelli's historic brief suppressing Loyola's Order, Zola obtained an appointment as rector and professor of ecclesiastical history at a seminary for Hungarian students, established at Pavia by the Emperor Joseph II.

He proved a zealous partisan of that monarch's reforms; he imagined, too, that the suppression of the Jesuits meant the dawn of a new era for the Church. Thus he indulged fearlessly in advanced religious and political views, his persuasive eloquence carrying most of the professors of Pavia with him. The Church then again treated him as a rebel; he was accused of infecting his seminary with heresy; and not only was he deprived of his rectorship, but the institution itself was closed. At last came the French Revolution; and the victories of the Republican arms in Italy brought Zola the professorships of history, jurisprudence, and diplomacy at the Pavian University. During the brief revival of Austrian rule (1799–1800) he was once more cast out, to be reinstated, however, immediately after Marengo. The last important incident of his life was a journey to Lyons as one of the Lombardian deputies whom Napoleon summoned thither when he constituted his Kingdom of Italy. A year later, 1806, Giuseppe Zola passed away at his native place. He was a man of considerable erudition, broad sympathies, and untiring energy. Besides writing a dozen volumes on theological and historical subjects, he edited and annotated numerous books,[1] invariably turning to literature for consolation amid the vicissitudes of his career, which has been recounted here at some little length because it is of a suggestive nature when one remembers that the Abate Giuseppe was a kinsman of the progenitors of Émile Zola.

---

[1] Only one of Giuseppe Zola's works — "Lezioni di Storia delle Leggi e di Costume de' popoli," etc., Milan, 1809 — is in the British Museum Library. Among the others, in addition to the volumes placed in the "Index expurga-

Those progenitors belonged to a branch of the family which had established itself at Venice, and which became noted for its men of the sword, even as the Brescian branch was noted for its Churchmen. The Zolas of Venice held military rank under the last Doges, then under the Cisalpine Republic, and eventually under Napoleon as King of Italy. Two of them fell in the great conqueror's service, one then holding the rank of colonel, the other that of major. A third, who became a colonel of engineers and inspector of military buildings, married a young girl of the island of Corfu, which had been subject to Venice since the close of the fourteenth century. Her name was Benedetta Kiariaki, and she introduced a Greek element into the Zola blood. It seems probable that she had several children, among whom were certainly two sons. The elder, called Marco, became a civil engineer, and rose to the highest rank in the State roads-and-bridges service. He had three children, two daughters named respectively Benedetta and Catarina, and a son, Carlo. Benedetta died unmarried, while Catarina was wedded to Cavaliere Antonio Petrapoli of Venice; but their only offspring, a daughter, was snatched from them in her childhood.

Carlo Zola, meantime, followed the profession of the law, and, after the foundation of the present Kingdom of Italy

---

torius," were some elaborate commentaries on the history of the Church (3 vols., 1780–1786), a dissertation on the theological authority of St. Augustine, a treatise on Death, etc.

(1866), was appointed a judge of the Appeal Court of Brescia. He died comparatively few years ago. Contemporary with him there were other Venetian and Brescian Zolas, cousins, presumably, of various degrees. In family letters of the first half of the last century, one reads of a Lorenzo, a Giuseppa, a Marius, and a Dorina Zola, but all these have passed away; and at the present time (1903) the only representative of the family in Italy would seem to be the Signora Emma Fratta, *née* Zola, a widow lady with four children.

But, besides Marco Zola, Benedetta Kiariaki, the Corfiote, had a son called Francesco in his earlier years, and François after he took up his residence in France. As a matter of fact he bore four Christian names, Francesco Antonio Giuseppe Maria — which may be taken as some indication of the family's gentle status. In the present narrative, in which it is necessary to speak of him at some little length, for he became the father of Émile Zola, it may be best to call him François. He was born at Venice on August 8, 1795, and entered the Royal Military School of Pavia in October, 1810. A corporal-cadet in March, 1811, a serjeant two months later, he obtained his first commission, as a sub-lieutenant in the Fourth Light Infantry, in April, 1812. In July of the same year he was transferred to the Royal Italian Artillery, with the rank of lieutenant. He was then only seventeen. Until the collapse of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy in 1814 he served under the viceroy Prince Eugène Beauharnais; and his regiment being afterwards incorporated in the Austro-Italian forces, he remained with it till 1820.[1]

---

[1] "La Vérité en Marche," by Émile Zola, Paris, 1901, p. 259. (Documents in the Dossier François Zola at the French War Office.)

But the exile of Napoleon to St. Helena had brought Europe a period of peace, and some leisure fell to the lot even of military men in active service. In all probability the "First Light Battery," to which François Zola belonged, was stationed at Padua; in any case, while still in the army, the young man perfected his studies at the Paduan University and secured the degree of doctor in mathematics. In 1818 he published a treatise on levelling ground,[1] which was adopted by the authorities at Milan (the capital of the Austrian dominions in Italy) as a text-book for the engineers of their roads-and-bridges service, and which procured for the young author, then three and twenty, the title of Associate of the Academy of Sciences, Letters, and Arts of Padua.[2]

If in 1820 he withdrew from military service, it was, as shown by a document in his own handwriting, preserved at the French War Office, because the Austrian Emperor "had been graciously pleased to order the introduction of the bastinado into his Italian regiments"; but although François Zola denounced this as a barbarous proceeding, he does not appear to have entertained any hatred of the Austrians generally. From a speech delivered at his funeral, one gathers that on quitting the army he worked under his brother Marco, then chief inspector of roads and bridges, became a properly qualified engineer, and was eventually sent to Upper Austria on some official surveying business. While there, he became acquainted with the Ritter von Gerstner and an engineer named Bergauer, in conjunction with whom he constructed the first tramway line laid down on the continent of Europe.[1]

---

[1] "Trattato di Livellazione topografica," by Francesco Zola, Dr. in Math., Lieut., Padua, 1818. 8vo.

[2] Funeral oration on F. Zola, by Maître Labot, Advocate at the Bar of the French Council of State.

It has been called a railway, and such it undoubtedly was, though not in the sense usually given to the word "railway" nowadays; for relays of horses were employed for traction. The line extended from Linz on the Danube to Budweis in Bohemia, a distance of seventy-eight miles; and though it seems to have been largely devised for the transport of timber from the Bohemian forests to the great waterway, there was also a passenger service, which still existed in our time.[2]

While constructing this line, Zola, in June, 1823, obtained personally the imperial authorisation to make another one, connecting Linz with Gmunden and the Salzkammergut — the so-called "Austrian Switzerland," industrially important for its extensive salt-works. But he became disappointed with the financial results of the Budweis line, and, accordingly, in September, 1830, he sold the Gmunden concession. It seems likely that he had then already quitted Austria. There are indications that he may have visited England with Ritter von Gerstner, and have sojourned for a time in Holland; but before the end of 1830 he was certainly in France, writing to King Louis Philippe respecting a scheme he had devised for the fortification of Paris. In the spring of 1831 he was in communication with the French War Office on this same subject, whilst also soliciting an appointment in the Foreign Legion, in Algeria, with the rank of captain.[1] The fortification scheme was shelved, but the appointment was granted, excepting in one respect: it was as a lieutenant, not as a captain, that François Zola entered the Foreign Legion in July, 1831.

---

[1] Documents printed by the "Neue Freie Presse" of Vienna (No. 12,028, February 17, 1898) and quoted in "Le Père d'Émile Zola," by Jacques Dhur, Paris, 1899.

[2] Baedecker's "Southern Germany and Austria," 1871.

His career in that corps proved very brief, and ended strangely. Many years afterwards an unprincipled journalist, anxious to discredit Émile Zola's championship of Captain Dreyfus, raked up the episode in order to denounce the novelist as the son of a thief. But it is certain that some documents cited at the time were entirely forged, that others were falsified in part, and that others, again, were suppressed. This can occasion no surprise when it is remembered that one of the *dossiers* concerning François Zola, preserved at the French War Office, passed for a time into the possession of the notorious forger, Colonel Henry;[2] and that an unscrupulous Minister, General Billot, by asserting authoritatively that certain papers did not exist,[3] contrived to delay their discovery. Those matters will require notice hereafter; at this stage one need only mention that the attack on François Zola's memory was answered first in a work called "Le Père d'Émile Zola" by a Socialist journalist, writing under the name of "Jacques Dhur," and secondly by Émile Zola himself in a series of newspaper articles, which he reprinted in a volume entitled "La Vérité en Marche."

After studying those books and the documents they quote, nobody of impartial mind can entertain the graver charges preferred against the novelist's father. In his time

---

[1] "La Vérité en Marche," pp. 259, 280–282.

[2] Probably in March, 1898. "La Vérité en Marche," pp. 251–253.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 277–279.

(1831–1832) great confusion prevailed in the Algerian army of occupation. Commanders and officers were constantly being changed, and Zola himself, after serving at first as a company officer, was temporarily entrusted with wardrobe matters, in his management of which some irregularities appear to have arisen, in consequence, perhaps, of the aforesaid confusion, or of Zola's inexperience of such duties, or even neglect of them. In this connection, it is asserted that he became involved in an intrigue with a married woman, the wife of an ex-non-commissioned officer, of German origin, named Fischer. It is alleged that in May, 1832, when this woman and her husband were on the point of sailing for France, Zola disappeared from his quarters; and that, some garments belonging to him having been found on the seashore near Algiers, it was at first thought he had committed suicide, or had been drowned while bathing. Somebody suggested, however, that he might be with the Fischers, and accordingly the vessel on which they had taken passage was searched. Zola was not there, but the Fischers acknowledged that a sum of fifteen hundred francs, out of four thousand found in their possession, belonged to him. This seemed a matter for investigation, particularly as a deficit in the wardrobe accounts had now been discovered. The Fischers, therefore, were arrested and brought on shore.

But Zola, from some unknown retreat, — unknown, that is, at the present time, — wrote to the Commander-in-Chief, General the Duke of Rovigo, offering to come forward, make up his accounts, and pay whatever deficit might be found. According to the Duke of Rovigo, as Zola was only suspected of bad management, and no judicial complaint had been laid against him, this offer was accepted. No court-martial was held, though the lieutenant, on presenting himself, was placed under arrest until his accounts had been adjusted. He then paid over what was due, and the *conseil d'administration* of the Foreign Legion having given him a discharge in full, the Duke of Rovigo ordered his release.

Meantime, Zola had tendered the resignation of his commission, and Marshal Soult, the Minister of War, who had been informed of the whole affair, objected that he ought not to have been set at liberty while this was still under consideration. Rovigo then wrote to the Minister justifying his own action;[1] and, in the result, after reference to the King in person, Zola's resignation was accepted.

Such are those facts of the case which seem to be well authenticated. It is known that several documents have disappeared from one of the Zola *dossiers* at the French Ministry of War, and that at least one letter attributed to Colonel Combe, who commanded the Foreign Legion in Zola's time, was forged; while another, couched in the strangest and wildest language, was doctored if not entirely invented. In such circumstances it is impossible to ascertain the whole truth concerning the affair; but the lenient view taken of it by the Duke of Rovigo, the life of high rectitude and able work which Zola led in after as in earlier years, the favour subsequently shown him by King Louis Philippe, to whom his case had been submitted, his later correspondence with Marshal Soult, to whom every particular was also known, — all tend to show that whatever may have been the exact nature of his delinquency, it was far less grave than his son's enemies wished one to imagine.

---

[1] "La Vérité en Marche," pp. 264–266.

It is even possible that the documents which have disappeared from his *dossier* would have shown that he ended by completely justifying himself. Indeed, those documents may have been abstracted for the express purpose of leaving suspicion on his memory. On the other hand, there may have been some imprudence on his part, some neglect or infringement of the cast-iron military regulations; and, as Émile Zola himself has admitted, if it be true that his father became infatuated with Madame Fischer, he may for a moment have lost his head — particularly, one may add, at the thought of her approaching departure from Algiers. None can say how it really happened that the Fischers had some of Zola's money in their possession. Had it been coaxed, or extorted, or, indeed, perhaps stolen from him?[1] In such a case many suppositions are allowable. Even if Zola absconded from his regiment in a moment of madness, it does not necessarily follow that he intended to flee with the woman; in fact, his subsequent behaviour suggests other conclusions. Moreover, the assertions respecting the amount of the deficit in Zola's accounts are contradictory; and when it is observed that he can only have been charged temporarily with the wardrobe department of the Foreign Legion, in the place, it would seem, of a certain Lieutenant Ridoux,[2] the question even arises how far he himself was really responsible for the deficit. In any case, he speedily discharged his liability.

---

[1] This idea has suggested itself to many people, and, curiously enough, is embodied in a five-act drama entitled "Fatalité," by M. Eugène Quènemeur, produced at Nantes in March, 1903, with Parisian artists in the chief parts. The play is a strange blending of François Zola's adventure and the Dreyfus case.

[2] "Le Père d'Émile Zola," pp. 176, 177.

On quitting the service, if there had been anything particularly reprehensible in Zola's conduct, any reason why he should have shunned all who knew the particulars of his case, he would scarcely have established himself at Marseilles, the chief port by which France communicated with Algeria, one whose intercourse with the new colony was continuous. Yet that is what he did. He is found practising the profession of a civil engineer at Marseilles, residing in the Rue de l'Arbre till 1835, then on the Cannebière till 1838, and employing three draughtsmen and two pupils. He takes part in all sorts of enterprises, a scheme to improve the lighting of the city streets, another to increase its supply of fresh water, and a third to develop its port, in which last affair he proposed the construction of new maritime docks. He first turned his attention to that matter in 1834, and it gave him occupation for over four years, during which he busied himself with surveying and sounding work, drew up fourteen explanatory memoirs, prepared innumerable plans, journeyed four or five times to Paris, obtained private audiences of the King and the Prince de Joinville, held converse with statesmen and members of parliament, disbursed in expenses of divers kinds a hundred thousand francs — partly earned and partly inherited from his mother, who died in or about 1836 — and carried on, meantime, an incessant newspaper campaign in support of his ideas.

But Marseilles preferred to construct the present Port de la Joliette, which has proved neither so safe nor so commodious an anchorage as was then anticipated, in such wise that more than once, of recent years, there has been talk of reverting to the skilful but contemned plans of François Zola. The latter was born before his time. In his various engineering enterprises, he constantly showed himself to be in advance of his age, — such as it was in France, — full of faith in science, gifted with remarkable foresight as to possible developments, and possessed of an energy which no rebuff could overcome. In 1831 his schemes for the fortification of Paris had been shelved; but directly that question was publicly revived by the French government (1839–1840), François Zola, undismayed by the failure of his long efforts at Marseilles, again did battle for his ideas. It is a curious circumstance, established by his writings and supplying strong proof of his foresight, that he was opposed to the construction of a rampart round the city, and advocated a system of detached forts. Long years afterwards, the Franco-German War of 1870 demonstrated the general accuracy of his views; the rampart, raised contrary to his advice, then proved absolutely useless, and is now being removed, in part at all events; while the advanced forts of the time, though their system was imperfect, alone rendered efficient service against the besiegers. But it is remarkable to find that of recent years, in adding to the forts which did duty during the German investment, in erecting others in advance of them so as to enclose a larger stretch of country, whence the city might derive supplies of food in time of siege, the French military authorities have followed in all noteworthy respects the line traced by François Zola, first in 1831, and secondly in 1840!

Thus time brings round its revenges. François Zola was a gifted and able man, and well might a son be proud of having such a father. How proud Émile Zola was to have sprung from one who showed such practical and far-seeing genius, how he vindicated his memory, and smote his traducers, all may read in the little volume entitled "Truth on the March."

But before François Zola made fresh efforts in the matter of fortifying Paris, he had quitted Marseilles for Aix, the old capital of Provence, having observed in the course of some visits how greatly that ancient city and some of the surrounding country suffered from a lack of water. The idea of damming certain gorges, forming huge reservoirs into which the mountain torrents might fall, and bringing the water to Aix by a canal, occurred to him, and he had already studied the matter for some months, when, in September, 1838, the chief local journal, "Le Mémorial d'Aix," gave publicity to his views. A preliminary agreement with the Municipal Council followed in December, and from that moment, what with this canal scheme, the Marseilles project, and the plans for fortifying Paris, Zola had his hands full. He was frequently compelled to visit the capital, and on one such occasion he fell in love and married.

This occurred early in 1839. François Zola, who is described as being a genuine Italian in appearance, dark, with a very expressive face, a delicately curved mouth, a well-shaped nose, and piercing eyes, was then three and forty, while his bride was in her twentieth year, simple, gentle, and very pretty. Their first meeting recalled that of Faust and Marguerite. He perceived her as she was leaving church, fell in love with her on the spot, sought her home and her parents in the Rue de Cléry, and wooed her with all the ardour of his Italian temperament. Her name was Françoise Émilie Aubert. Born in 1819, under the shadow of the tower of Philip Augustus, in the little town of Dourdan,[1] between the forest of that name and the great grain-producing plain of La Beauce — where Émile Zola laid the scene of his novel "La Terre" — she was of modest condition, her father having retired from business as a tradesman at Dourdan, and made his home in Paris, where he lived on a small income. But François Zola was no dowry hunter. He loved Émilie Aubert, and that sufficed. Her parents consenting to the match, everything was settled in a few weeks, the marriage taking place at the town hall of the First Arrondissement of Paris, on March 16, 1839.

Immediately afterwards the engineer carried his bride southward, and their honeymoon was spent amid the glowing scenery of Provence. For a twelvemonth they remained at Aix and Marseilles, Zola busying himself the while with his canal and dock plans; the first then beginning to take shape and the second approaching final rejection. At last, early in 1840, he repaired to Paris again, probably on account of the fortification scheme; and this time, accompanied as he was by his wife, who now expected to become a mother, and foreseeing that their sojourn in the capital might prove a long one, he did not, as previously, betake himself to any *maison meublée*, but rented and furnished the fourth floor of a house in the Rue St. Joseph, a narrow lane-like street, running from the Rue Montmartre to the Rue du Sentier, at two minutes' walk from the Boulevards and within a stone's throw of the Bourse.

Parisian historians tell us that in mediæval days this Rue St. Joseph was called the Rue du Temps Perdu, the Street of Lost Time, a name which none of them has been able to explain. In 1640, at the end near the Rue Montmartre, a chapel dedicated to St. Joseph was erected in a graveyard apportioned to the parishioners of St. Eustache. And here were buried in succession two men of genius, whose names will endure with the French language. The first was the great Molière, the second the good La Fontaine. But the Revolution swept both chapel and graveyard away, — a market and houses arose in their place, — and the tombs of the illustrious dead were consigned to a museum, to be removed ultimately to Père-Lachaise.

---

[1] The birthplace also of the famous La Bruyère of the "Caractères," and of Francisque Sarcey, the eminent French critic.

The new home of François Zola stood, then, on an historic and once consecrated spot. It was a house erected in 1839, with five stories above its ground floor. The fifth and uppermost stood back a little, being faced by a terrace with iron railings. Beneath this terrace were the five front windows of Zola's flat, for which he paid an annual rental of twelve hundred francs; and the window nearest to the Rue du Sentier was that of the bedroom which he occupied with his wife; the dining-room being in the rear, where it overlooked the Rue du Croissant, famous in the history of French journalism. Nowadays the Rue St. Joseph itself — including the very house where François Zola resided[1] — harbours several publishing offices; in fact, newspapers, periodicals, and books pour forth from these streets incessantly. But such would not seem to have been the case in 1840, when the newspaper trade of Paris was carried on chiefly in and about the Rue de la Victoire.

---

[1] At the time referred to, this house was No. 10 *bis* (or as one would put it in England, 10 *a*) in the street. But owing to various changes it has become the only No. 10. M. Mongrédien's publishing business, and the offices of a popular weekly, "La Semaine illustrée," are now (1903) installed in the house, the accompanying view of which is from a photograph taken under exceptional difficulties (owing to the extreme narrowness of the street) by the author's friend, M. Auguste Waser, architect, of Paris.

Directly the Zolas were installed in their new abode the young wife had to make preparations for her expected babe. In this matter she was assisted by her mother, Madame Aubert, a bright and sturdy woman, who had sprung from that peasantry which is the backbone of France. And soon afterwards, at eleven o'clock on the night of Wednesday, April 2, on a camp-bedstead, placed near the bedroom window already mentioned, there was born a child, who to the great delight of parents and grandparents was found to be a boy. Two days later the birth was registered at the Municipal Offices of the district, and the babe then received the names of Émile Édouard Charles Antoine.[1]

Born on the spot where Molière and La Fontaine had slumbered, that boy was destined like them to rise to literary celebrity. The laugh which Molière cast over human vileness, the light archness of La Fontaine, were never his. It was with deep earnestness that he stripped every Tartuffe of his last shred of clothing, that he bared every social sore to the gaze of a shrinking world. And the moral of his disclosures was not pointed in any vein of half-indulgent sarcasm, but writ large, in letters of fire, which burnt and branded. Moreover, a supreme destiny was reserved for him: his voice became at one moment that of the conscience of mankind.[2]

At the time of his birth the Victorian age was dawning in England. The Queen had lately married. Most of Tennyson's work was still undone, and so was Ruskin's.

---

[1] See *post*, Appendix A. Declaration of the birth of Émile Zola.

[2] Anatole France, October 5, 1902.

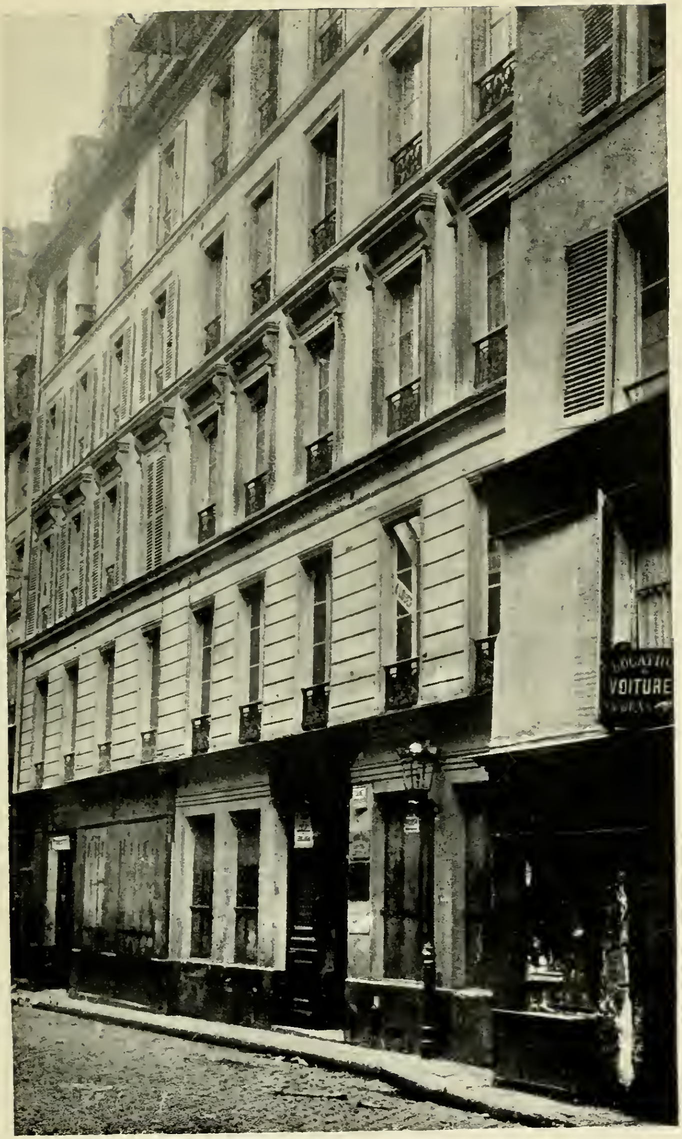


Photo by A. Waser

The Birthplace of Émile Zola

10, Rue St. Joseph, Paris

Bailey had just leapt into renown with "Festus." Browning, in 1840, produced his "Sordello," and his wife her "Drama of Exile"; while Hood meandered "Up the Rhine," and Tupper basked in the continued popularity of his book of platitudes, already two years old. Meantime Faraday had published the first edition of his "Experimental Researches in Electricity"; Darwin, advancing slowly and methodically towards great pronouncements, was preparing the "Zoölogy of the Voyage of the Beagle"; John Stuart Mill was meditating on his "System of Logic." And while Southey completed his naval History, while Agnes Strickland began to issue her "Lives of the Queens," and Harriet Martineau her History of thirty years, Macaulay wrote his Essays, and Carlyle discoursed on "Heroes and Hero-worship."

For the *bon ton* of London, the Countess of Blessington's now forgotton "Belle of the Season" was one of the novels of the day; but in that same year, 1840, Dickens published his "Old Curiosity Shop," Thackeray his "Catherine" and his "Paris Sketch Book," Ainsworth his "Tower," James his "Man at Arms," Marryat his "Poor Jack," Hook his "Cousin Geoffrey," and Frances Trollope her "Widow Married," with which she hoped to repeat the success of her clever "Widow Barnaby." Bulwer, for his part, was writing "Night and Morning," and Lever was recording the exploits of "Charles O'Malley," while Disraeli, who had produced his tragedy "Alarcos" the previous year, turned for a time from literature. The Brontës and Kingsley had given nothing as yet; the Rossettis were children, like George Meredith, then twelve years old; and among those who in 1840 first saw the light were John Addington Symonds and Thomas Hardy.

Meantime, across the Atlantic, Van Buren being President of the United States, Emerson was writing his "Method of Nature"; Longfellow his "Voices of the Night"; Lowell, "A Year's Life"; Irving on his side contributing "Wolfert's Roost" to the "Knickerbocker," Willis publishing his "Corsair," and Poe his "Tales of the Grotesque."

To English and American readers those imperfect summaries may give some idea of the "literary movement" in Great Britain and the United States at the time when Émile Zola was born. But what of his own country, France? During nearly ten years Louis Philippe had been reigning there; and a few months later the ashes of Napoleon were to be brought back from St. Helena; for the Orléans monarchy, which had now reached its zenith, imagined itself to be quite secure. Indeed, when in August, that same year, the great conqueror's nephew descended on Boulogne, with a tame eagle upon his arm and a proclamation in his pocket, he covered himself with ridicule instead of the glory he had anticipated. And, again, though it was in 1840 that Louis Blanc first issued his "Organisation du Travail," before beginning his "Histoire de Dix Ans," Republican and Socialist propaganda was not as yet sufficiently advanced to bear much fruit.

Literature flourished, and cast upon the reign the glory which it failed to glean on other fields, for little came from Algerian exploits, however dashing, and none at all was harvested by an adventurous diplomacy. But a generation of remarkable writers had arisen, some among them great, many of them eminent in their respective spheres. In 1840, no doubt, the shadows were gathering around Chateaubriand, Casimir Delavigne could see his transient popularity declining, Alfred de Vigny's best work was already done; but Hugo, "Victor in drama, victor in romance," pursued with undimmed lustre his triumphal course. Moreover, Lamartine had just issued his "Recueillements poétiques," and Musset was publishing his tales in prose. Meantime, Michelet and the Thierrys gave life to History; while Ste. Beuve — when not wandering after petticoats, and meditating on that "Livre d'Amour" which he was to produce three years later, and afterwards to destroy, as far as possible, with his own hands — was penning those Monday criticisms which may still be read with so much profit as well as pleasure.

Gautier was in Spain, having left the critical arm-chair of "La Presse" to the gifted and ill-fated Gérard de Nerval; but Janin discoursed in the "Débats" with his usual flippancy, at one moment suggesting (in ignorance that any "Mrs. Grundy" would ever assert herself) that Paul de Kock and his indecorum were best suited to the English taste, whereas Monsieur de Balzac might well seek popularity in Russia. Thither, as it happened, the great delineator of "La Comédie Humaine" repaired for the first time towards the close of that year, which found him in a despondent mood. In March, "Vautrin" had been produced and promptly laid under interdict, because Frédérick Lemaître, who impersonated the great rascal, had "made himself a head" like the King's. And sixteen volumes and twenty acts, written in a twelvemonth, Balzac complained, had not brought him freedom from pecuniary worries, even though the proceeds amounted to one hundred and fifty thousand francs.

If Balzac took his pecuniary cares to heart, there was little if any fretting on the part of that splendid prodigal the great Dumas, who now issued his "Chevalier d'Harmental," an inferior work, no doubt, yet one which showed traces of the lion's paw. Sue's contribution to the literature of 1840, "La Vigie de Koat-Ven," is now almost forgotten; so is Legouvé's "Edith de Falsen," though it ran through several editions. Doubtless one of the most popular novels of the day was still Charles de Bernard's best work, "Gerfaut," the fifth edition of which now came from the press. George Sand, for her part, was penning a minor work, "Pauline"; Soulié was building his "Château des Pyrénées"; and Mérimée, diffident and painstaking, was copying and modifying, sixteen times in succession, his still familiar tale of "Colomba." Stendhal had given his "Chartreuse de Parme" to the world in the previous year. Flaubert was but a young man of nineteen, travelling in southern France and plunging, at Marseilles, into a transient love affair, which was to suggest an episode of "Madame Bovary." Finally, in that same year, 1840, — within six weeks after the birth of Émile Zola, — Alphonse Daudet, who was destined to become his friend, and, in a sense, his rival for fame, came into the world at Nîmes in Provence.

In these two, Zola and Daudet, was repeated a phenomenon often observed in the history of French literature: the advent of a superior man of strong masculinity, attended or soon followed by that of another, distinguished by femininity of mind. Thus Corneille and Racine, Voltaire and Rousseau, Hugo and Lamartine. Very similar was the *accouplement* of Zola and Daudet, who, the one appealing to the reason, the other to the heart, stood in the domain of fiction, at least at one period of their careers, head and shoulders above every contemporary. Daudet waged his battle with a quick and slender rapier, Zola brandished a heavy mace — akin to those redoubtable weapons with which the warriors of mediæval days beat down the helms of their antagonists. Some, too, have likened Daudet to an Arab horse, all eagerness and nerves; while Zola has been called a cactus of Provence that had sprouted between the paving-stones of Paris. The great city was his birthplace, and he was proud of it; yet Provence certainly had many claims on him, for there he was conceived, and there, as the following pages will show, he spent the greater part of his childhood under circumstances which exercised no little influence on his disposition, life, and work.

II

EARLY YEARS

1840–1860

François Zola in Paris — A rebuff and a success — Progress of his canal scheme — He is struck down by the "mistral" and dies — His obsequies and his grave — Difficulties of his widow and son — Lawsuits — Aix, a city of Philistines or of enlightenment? — Émile Zola, a spoilt child — His first schooling and first chums — He plays the truant — Declining family circumstances — Zola is sent to the Aix College — His many prizes, and his first literary attempts — The college and its masters — Zola, Baille, and Cézanne; their pranks and their rambles — The country round Aix — Zola's lines on Provence — He is influenced by Hugo and Musset — Ideal love: Gratienne and Ninon — Increasing family penury — Madame Zola seeks help in Paris — She is joined there by her son — Zola at the Lycée St. Louis — He is "ploughed" for a degree in Paris — His vacations in Provence — Early poetry — He is "ploughed" at Marseilles — His studies stopped — A gloomy outlook.

The infancy of Émile Zola was spent in Paris, his father's enterprises compelling the family to remain there till 1843. Throughout 1840 the engineer was preparing plans of his fortification scheme, issuing pamphlets, corresponding with Thiers, and interviewing General Despans-Cubières, Minister of War. He renewed his efforts when Thiers fell from power and was succeeded by Marshal Soult; but he was unable to overcome the stolid indifference of General Dode, the war-office director of fortifications, who, without even examining his plans, reported against them on the ground that the government and the defence committee had made up their minds four years previously with respect to what system should be adopted. As Soult accepted this view of the matter, Zola's efforts again came to nothing. His only consolation was that, early in 1841, when the Paris fortification bill was finally discussed by the legislature, his ideas found supporters in General Schneider and M. Dufaure, a subsequent prime minister of France.[1] A better result attended Zola's invention of an appliance for removing the masses of earth, which, he foresaw, would be thrown up in digging the moat of the Paris rampart. He patented this invention in June, 1841, and after his appliance had been constructed at some works in the Rue de Miromesnil in 1842, it was employed successfully in the excavations at Clignancourt.[2]

A few months later the indomitable engineer again turned to his scheme for providing Aix with water. Removing thither with his wife and child, he signed, in April, 1843, a new agreement with the municipality, followed in June by another with the mayor of Le Tholonet; for a large dam was to be constructed near that village, at the entrance of the Infernet gorges. But although Zola's earlier suggestions had now prompted the neighbouring city of Marseilles to cut a canal from Pertuis on the Durance, — an enterprise carried out by a distinguished engineer named Montrichet between 1839 and 1849, — some of the good people of Aix and its vicinity remained uninfluenced by the example, and a long battle ensued.

The waters which Zola had finally decided to bring to Aix were those of the little rivers Causse and Bayou, and the interested villages were gradually won over, though, now and again, territorial magnates like the Marquis de Galliffet, Prince de Martigues, — father of the well-known general officer and owner of the château of Le Tholonet, — remained hostile to the scheme. Fortunately Zola, besides having a good friend in M. Aude, the mayor of Aix, obtained support in Paris, notably from Thiers and Mignet, whose association with the old Provençal city is well known; and thus, in May, 1844, he obtained a royal declaration of the public utility of his project, with leave to expropriate landowners, purchase land, and capture water on terms which were to be arranged. The landowners, however, often set extravagant prices on their property, bitter disputes arose over valuations, and all sorts of authorities, with interests at stake, raised one and another claim and difficulty; the Council of State at last having to re-adjust Zola's agreements with municipalities and others, in such wise that a final covenant was only signed in June, 1845. Zola then returned to Paris with his wife and son, for, apart from all municipal help, a considerable amount of money had to be raised for the enterprise, and it was not until midsummer, 1846, that the Zola Canal Company was at last constituted.[1]

---

[1] "Le Père d'Émile Zola," p. 212 *et seq.*; "La Vérité en Marche," p. 295 *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 306.

Then the engineer went southward once more. One reads in contemporary newspapers that the great struggle had affected his health, that he was no longer so strong as formerly, but it is certain that he felt full of confidence. His courageous efforts were about to yield fruit: the work was begun, the first sod was cut, the first blasting operations were carried out successfully. Zola stood, as it were, on the threshold of the promised land. And then, all at once, destiny struck him down. One morning, after three months' toil, while he was superintending his men, the "mistral" wind, that scourge of southern France, descended upon the valley where they were working. The icy blast laid its clutch upon Zola, but, although he already felt its chill, he would not defer a business visit to Marseilles. He repaired thither, installing himself, as was his habit, at the Hôtel de la Méditerranée kept by one Moulet, in the Rue de l'Arbre. That same night he was attacked by pleurisy, and on the morrow it became necessary to summon his wife, who had remained at Aix. All remedies proved unavailing, and within a week he expired in her arms. Thirty years afterwards that sudden death, in a second-class hotel, amid unpacked trunks and the coming and going of heedless travellers, suggested to Zola's son the account of Charles Grandjean's death given in "Une Page d'Amour." [1]

---

[1] Société du Canal Zola: deeds drawn by Maître Baudier, Notary in Paris.

It was on Saturday, March 27, 1847, that François Zola thus passed away. His remains were embalmed, and the obsequies took place at Aix on the ensuing Tuesday, when the clergy went in procession to the Place de la Rotonde, beyond the walls, to receive the body on its arrival. The pall-bearers were the sub-prefect, the mayor, the government district engineer, and Maître Labot, an eminent advocate of the Council of State and the Court of Cassation, who had been one of Zola's leading supporters. The capitular clergy, headed by a Canon-bishop of St. Denis, officiated at the rites in the cathedral; and, as chief mourner, immediately behind the hearse, when escorted by the civil and military authorities it took the road to the cemetery, between crowds of spectators, there walked a pale-faced little boy, barely seven years of age, who moved as in a dream. In after years he retained little recollection of his father. He pictured him best, he was wont to say, by the aid of all that his mother had related of his affectionate tenderness, his unflagging energy, his high and noble views. Thus how great was the son's amazement, indignation, and sorrow when, long years afterwards, unscrupulous enemies tried to make the world believe that his father had been a thief.

---

[1] Paul Alexis' "Émile Zola: Notes d'un Ami," 2d edition, Paris, 1882, p. 130. É. Zola's "Une Page d'Amour," Paris, 1878, pp. 20, 21.

On that matter the reader will form his own opinion, and it is largely to enable him to do so that the chief facts of François Zola's career of honourable and untiring industry have been recapitulated in these pages. But another purpose also has been served. As the narrative of Émile Zola's life proceeds, it will be observed how truly he was his father's son, evincing in manhood the same energy, industry, and perseverance, the same passion to strive against obstacles, and, by striving, overcome them. In his case, the prompting of inherited nature is the more manifest as he was of such tender years when his father died, and thus escaped the influence of companionship and example, which so often increase the resemblance of father and son. Ah, that poor contemned doctrine of heredity, as old as the world itself, how could Émile Zola fail to believe in it when he himself was a striking illustration of its workings?

François Zola's widow placed a modest slab upon her husband's grave in the cemetery of Aix, in which she herself was to be laid three and thirty years later. A cedar shades the tomb from the flaring sky poised over that glowing field of death, whence the view spreads to many a hill and mountain, clad in blue and purple. And on the slab, which is protected by iron chains dangling from granite billets, one reads: "François Zola, 1795–1847. Françoise Émilie Zola, *née* Aubert, 1819–1880." Aix, however, does not need the presence of that tomb to remind it of one of its most notable benefactors. Although François Zola died when his work was only in its first stage, although a little later his original scheme was foolishly cut down, in such wise as to necessitate other subsequent costly undertakings, and although thirty-one years elapsed before the water he had coveted at last entered Aix, the enterprise he planned has always been known popularly as the Zola Canal. Further, after its completion in 1868, the local municipality then in office, to efface in a measure the inconsiderate treatment of his widow and his son by previous municipalities, bestowed the name of Boulevard François Zola on a thoroughfare till then called the Boulevard du Chemin-neuf.[1]

The expression "inconsiderate treatment" is certainly not too severe a one to be applied to the action of some of the authorities of Aix in their dealings with Zola's widow, who, in her own name and her son's, inherited her husband's interest in the canal scheme. But she had to contend also with others associated with the work. It was virtually a repetition, or rather a variation, of the familiar story of the confiding inventor and the greedy capitalist. In this instance the inventor was dead, and only his heirs remained. He had fully disclosed his scheme, prepared his plans, and others were eager to profit by them. Thus his widow and his little boy were gradually regarded as incumbrances, nuisances. Why not set them aside? Why not rob them? Are not the widow and the orphan robbed every day? Besides, it is often easy to bamboozle a young and inexperienced woman in matters of law. Already at this time Madame Zola's parents had come to live with her at Aix; but her father was aged, and deficient, it would seem, in business capacity; while her mother, however bright, active, and thrifty, was not the woman to give unimpeachable advice on intricate legal questions. As for little Émile, now seven years old, he did not even know his letters; he spent happy, careless days in the sunshine, blissfully ignorant that trouble was assailing the home, and would some day destroy it. Yet it was he who, long years afterwards, avenged his father and his mother, in the only manner possibly in which they could be avenged. Perhaps it did not affect the despoilers personally; many of them, indeed, must have been dead at the time, and those who survived may have only sneered, for the gold was theirs. None the less the pictures of Aix and its society, traced in four or five volumes of the Rougon-Macquart novels, were instinct with retribution. Aix still raises ineffectual protests whenever it hears that name of Plassans which the novelist gave it, and which, though its origin was simple enough, — for it was merely a modification of Flassans, the name of a village near Brignoles, southeast of Aix, — acquired under Zola's caustic pen an element of opprobrium.

---

[1] "La Vérité en Marche," p. 241.

The displeasure of Aix in this respect has been the more marked as the city's past is not destitute of grandeur. One of the earliest stations of the Romans in Gaul, it became the metropolis of the Second Narbonensis; but its walls, porticoes, thermæ, arena, and temples were largely destroyed when the Saracens sacked it in the eighth century, and few memorials of its classic era now exist. As the capital of Provence in the days of "good King René," whose court was described by Scott in "Anne of Geierstein," Aix regained some lustre, followed half a century later by a period of trouble, many of its mediæval monuments being wrecked during the struggle between Francis I and Charles V, who was crowned King of Arles in the fane of St. Sauveur. Nevertheless, girdled by picturesque mountains, with its old town, new town, and faubourg, rich in stately edifices, pleasant promenades, and elegant fountains, Aix remains one of the notable cities of southern France. And if, administratively, as the French say, it is now only a sub-prefecture of the department of the Bouches-du-Rhône, it continues to be an archbishop's see, and retains its courts of justice and its faculties of theology, law, and letters. Its university is perhaps its greatest boast, though it is also proud of its museum and its splendid library, which is known to scholars all the world over. Thus Aix claims to be a city of enlightenment, not a town of Philistines, as it was largely pictured by Émile Zola; but one must remember that he described things as they were in his time, and that if a new and more active generation has arisen nowadays, it was preceded by others, somnolent and neglectful.

Aix has given several distinguished sons to France: the elder Vanloo; Vauvenargues, the moralist; Mignet, the historian; Brueys, the poet, and Brueys, the admiral who fell at the battle of the Nile; Michel Adanson and Piton de Tournefort, the eminent naturalists; François Granet, who translated Newton into French, and François Marius Granet, his nephew, who distinguished himself in art, and became one of the city's benefactors. Again, Portalis, the great jurisconsult, who prepared the Concordat which still binds France and the Papal See, was for a time one of the shining lights of the city; and Thiers, though born at Marseilles, completed his studies at Aix, took his degrees, and was called to the bar there. Curiously enough, the house where Thiers had lived in his student days was the first home of the Zolas at Aix. It stood at the end of a strip of road, a "no thoroughfare," called picturesquely the Impasse Sylvacanne. There was a large garden to the house, and in that garden little Émile disported himself as he listed.

His mother and grandmother spoilt him, as the saying goes. His father's death filled them with indulgence for his childish faults. He was a boy to be petted and humoured, for the greatest of misfortunes had fallen on him. Spending so much of his time in the open air, he was becoming quite a sturdy little fellow, sun-tanned, with soft, thoughtful eyes and a perky nose, and his incessant questions seemed to indicate the possession of an intelligent and eager mind. But, as yet, no attempt was made to educate him. His mother was already busy with her lawyers, striving to enforce her claims, and endeavouring also to obtain influential support. When Thiers came to Aix some four months after François Zola's death, the widow presented her little son to the great man in the hope of thereby arousing his sympathy. And Thiers certainly responded with fair words, though whether he went further is doubtful. At all events, lawsuits were started, and to the worry they entailed one must ascribe the comparative neglect in which young Émile remained a little longer.

At last, in the autumn of 1847, it was decided to send him to school. Some doubt as to the result of the lawsuits was already arising in the minds of Madame Zola and her parents, and they felt that they must at least provide for the boy's future by giving him a sound education. It was suggested that he should be sent immediately to the College of Aix — now called the Lycée Mignet; but as he did not even know his letters, Madame Aubert, his grandmother, sensibly decided to select a preparatory school. One was found near the Notre Dame gate, from which it derived its appellation of Pension Notre Dame. It was kept by a worthy and indulgent pedagogue, named Isoard, who after infinite trouble — for the boy was stubborn and bitterly regretted his careless life in the open air — contrived to teach him to read the Fables of La Fontaine. It was at this time that young Émile formed his earliest life-friendships; he became attached to two of his school-fellows, one of whom, Solari, a sculptor of distinguished talent, is still alive, while the other, Marius Roux, acquired a passing reputation as a "popular" novel writer.[1] These two were Zola's usual playmates at marbles, tops, and leap-frog, his first companions also in the rambles in which he began to indulge.

For some reason or other, Madame Zola and the Auberts moved from the Impasse Sylvacanne to the Pont-de-Beraud, in the open country, on the road to Toulon, and then young Émile had fields before him with a picturesque stream, the Torse, so called on account of its capricious windings — "a torrent in December, the most timid of rivulets in the fine weather," as he called it afterwards in his "Contes à Ninon." And the charms of the country, the inviting banks of the Torse, often made a truant of him, — a truant who remained unpunished, for as his grandparents generally said: "It was not right to cross the poor fatherless boy."

The position of the family was now, however, becoming difficult. The widow's savings were dwindling away in legal and living expenses; and some who had been willing to help her were at present unable to do so, having lost authority, influence, and, at times, even means. France had passed through a revolution, Louis Philippe had been overthrown; unrest was widespread throughout the period of the Second Republic; and when Louis Napoleon strangled that *régime* in the night, Provence became convulsed, there were risings, excesses, bloodshed, even as Émile Zola subsequently depicted in the pages of "La Fortune des Rougon." The new municipality of Aix, appointed after the Coup d'État, was not inclined to effect any reasonable compromise with those Orléanist *protégés,* the Zolas. One on whom they had largely relied, Thiers, was himself virtually a fugitive. Again, in those days of trouble the law's delays became greater than ever; apart from which it would seem that Madame Zola's actions were altogether ill-conducted. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1852, though her affairs were taking a very unfavourable course, and it was becoming necessary to trench upon the investments whence the Auberts derived their modest personal income, it was at last decided to send Émile to the College of Aix as a boarder; and the family, in order to be nearer to him, moved into the town, its new home being in the Rue Bellegarde.

---

[1] Among his works, which in the first instance generally appeared as *feuilletons* in Paris newspapers, were "Eugénie Lamour," "Francis et Mariette," "Les Mariages Jaunes," and "Evariste Planchu, Mœurs vraies du Quartier Latin," the last named being perhaps his best book.

The boy could now see that the family resources were diminishing. The last servant had been dismissed, and it was his grandmother, the still lively and sturdy Beauceronne, who attended to most of the housework. Moreover, she and her daughter had largely taken the lad into their confidence, and he, precociously realising that his future would most likely depend on his own exertions, resolved to turn over a new leaf. Though his love for the open air in no wise diminished, he studied profitably from the time of entering the College of Aix in October, 1852. He was placed in the seventh class (the lowest but one), and at the expiration of the school year, in August, 1853, he was awarded first prizes for history and geography, recitation, and the translation of Latin into French, and second prizes for grammar, arithmetic, religious instruction, and the translation of French into Latin.[1] In the following year, in the sixth class, he was less successful, some antipathy, it is said, existing between him and one of the professors.[2] Nevertheless, his name was inscribed on the *tableau d'honneur*, and he obtained a first prize for history and geography, a first *accessit*[3] in religious instruction, and third *accessits* in excellence and recitation.

Next, 1854–1855, he passed into the fifth class, in which he gained two first prizes for Latin, translation and composition; a second prize for the translation of Greek into French; a first *accessit* in excellence, and third *accessits* in French, history, geography, and recitation. At the end of the ensuing school year, when he joined the fourth class, he secured four first prizes — excellence, Latin composition, Latin verse, translation from Latin into French; and three second prizes — history and geography, grammar, and Greek exercise. Finally, in 1856–1857 (his last completed year, spent in the third class) he was awarded: the *tableau d'honneur* prize, first prizes for excellence, French composition, arithmetic, geometry, physics, chemistry, natural history, and recitation; second prizes for religious instruction and translation from the Latin; with a first *accessit* in history and geography. He was then in his eighteenth year, and if prize-winning might be taken as a criterion, there was every likelihood that he would achieve a distinguished career.

---

[1] "Palmarès du Collège d'Aix," 1853 *et seq.*

[2] P. Alexis, *l. c.*, p. 21.

[3] An *accessit* is a distinction conferred, in French colleges, on the three pupils who come nearest to a prize winner.

But one must now go back a little, for other matters marked those school days at Aix. At first the boy boarded at the college, then he became a half-boarder, and finally an *externe*, or day pupil, taking his meals at home; these changes being necessitated by the gradually declining position of his family. Already while he was a boarder, that is, barely in his teens, his literary bent began to assert itself, a perusal of Michaud's "Histoire des Croisades" inspiring him to write a romance of the middle ages, copiously provided with knights, Saracens, and fair damsels in distress. That boyish effort, though the almost illegible manuscript was preserved through life by its author, remained unprinted; and a like fate attended a three-act comedy in verse, entitled "Enfoncé le Pion," or "The Usher Outwitted." However, given these literary leanings, and a fervent admiration for some of the poets, as will presently be shown, it may at first seem strange that on entering the third class in 1856, and being called upon to choose between letters and sciences, Zola, then over seventeen, should have selected the latter. In this respect, as Paul Alexis says, he was influenced in part by the fact that, however proficient he might be in the dead languages, he had no real taste for them, whereas the natural sciences interested him; but his choice was also partially governed by the fact that he was the son of an engineer, and that a scientific career would be in accordance with his parentage. In his studies he was guided by one simple, self-imposed rule, a rule which he carried into his after-life, and which largely proved the making of him. He did not eschew play and other recreation, he did not spend interminable hours in poring over books, there was nothing "goody-goody" about him; but he invariably learnt his lessons, prepared his exercises, before he went to play. And, all considered, no more golden rule can be offered to the schoolboy.

Zola and his disciple Paul Alexis, who also studied at the Aix College, have sketched it as it was at that time — a former convent, old and dank, with a somewhat forbidding frontage, a dark chapel, and grimly barred windows facing a quiet little square, on which still stands the rococo fountain of the Four Dolphins. Within the gate were two large yards, one planted with huge plane trees, and the other reserved chiefly for gymnastic exercises, while all around were the class-rooms, the lower ones dismal, damp, and stuffy, and the upper ones more cheerful of aspect, with windows overlooking the greenery of neighbouring gardens. The refectory again was quite a den, always redolent of dish-water; but comparative comfort might be found in the infirmary, managed by some "gentle sisters in black gowns and white coifs." The masters, if Zola's subsequent account of them in "L'Œuvre" may be trusted, were generally ridiculed by the boys, who gave them opprobrious nicknames. One, never known to smile, was called "Rhadamantus"; another, "who by the constant rubbing of his head had left his mark on the wall behind every seat he occupied, was named, plumply, 'Filth'"; and a third had his wife's repeated infidelity openly cast in his face.

Of course, the boys also had their nicknames, Zola, says Paul Alexis, acquiring that of "Franciot," or "Frenchy," which was given him because his pronunciation of various words differed from that of his Provençal school-fellows. This was not to be wondered at, the parent to whom he owed his mother tongue being a Beauceronne. Other anecdotes which picture him suffering from an impediment in his speech may be taken with a grain of salt, perhaps, as the official records show that he gained prizes and *accessits* for recitation. As had been the case at the Pension Notre Dame, he formed a close friendship with a few of his school-fellows. One of these was a lawyer's son, named Marguery, a bright, merry lad with musical tastes, who a few years later, to the general amazement, blew his brains out in a fit of insanity. Another was Antony Valabrègue, afterwards a tasteful poet, whose family, curiously enough, became connected with that of Captain Dreyfus. Valabrègue being some years younger than Zola, their companionship at school did not go very far; but they subsequently corresponded, and intimacy ensued between them. At the college Zola's more particular chums were Cézanne and Baille, the former afterwards well known as an impressionist painter, the second as a professor at the École Polytechnique. Baille, Cézanne, and Zola became inseparables; and though all three were fairly diligent pupils in class-time, they indulged in many a boyish prank together during the earlier years of their sojourn at the college.

One morning, in a spirit of mischievousness, they burnt the shoes of a school-fellow, a lank lad called Mimi-la-Mort, *alias* the Skeleton Day Boarder, who smuggled snuff into the school. Then one winter evening they purloined some matches in the chapel and smoked dry chestnut leaves in reed pipes there. Zola, who was the ringleader on that occasion, afterwards frankly confessed his terror; owning that a cold perspiration had come upon him as he scrambled out of the dark choir. Again, another day, Cézanne hit upon the idea of roasting some cock-chafers in his desk to see whether they were good to eat, as people said they were. So terrible became the stench, so dense the smoke, that the usher rushed for some water, under the impression that the place was on fire. At another time they sawed off the wooden seats in one of the courtyards, and carried them like corpses round the basin of so-called ornamental water in the centre of the yard, other boys joining them, forming in procession, and singing funeral dirges. But in the midst of it all, Baille, who played the priest, tumbled into the basin while trying to scoop some water into his cap, which was to have served as a holy-water pot.[1]

The three inseparables engaged also in many a stone-throwing fight with the town lads, clambered over the old, crumbling, ivy-clad ramparts, and basked on "King René's chimney"[2] on occasions when the mistral thundered by,—"buffeting the houses, carrying away their roofs, dishevelling the trees, and raising great clouds of dust, while the sky became a livid blue, and the sun turned pale."[3] There were excursions also, sometimes by way of escorting regiments, which on changing garrison passed through the town, at other moments on the occasion of religious processions when the clergy appeared in their finest vestments, their acolytes swinging censers and ringing bells, the military and municipal bands discoursing music, the white-gowned girls carrying banners, and the boys scattering roses and golden broom.

---

[1] Zola's "L'Œuvre," Chap. II.

[2] "If it is good King René whom you seek, you will find him at this time walking in his chimney . . . the narrow parapet yonder; it extends between these two towers, has an exposure to the south, and is sheltered in every other direction. Yonder it is his pleasure to walk and enjoy the beams of the sun on such cool mornings as the present. It nurses, he says, his poetical vein."—Scott's "Anne of Geierstein," Chap. XXIX.

[3] Zola's "Le Docteur Pascal."

Although Émile Zola eventually lost all faith in the dogmas of the Roman Church, the pomp of its cult impressed him throughout his life, as is shown by many passages in his works. And in his boyhood the processions of Aix delighted him. He himself sometimes took part in them — acting on at least one occasion, in 1856, as a clarionet player of the college *fanfare*, for his friend Marguery had imparted to him some taste for music.

Then as now Aix had its theatre, which Zola and his young friends patronised whenever they could afford a franc for a pit seat; but they eschewed *café* life and the gambling which usually attends it in the provinces, for whenever they had time at their disposal they infinitely preferred to roam the country. The environs of Aix are strangely picturesque. There is the famous Mont Ste. Victoire, ascended through thickets of evergreen oaks and holly, pines, wild roses, and junipers, till at last only some box plants dot the precipitous slopes, veined like marble; while in a cavern near the summit is the weird bottomless pit of Le Garagay, whose demon-spirits Margaret of Anjou vainly interrogated in "Anne of Geierstein." Again, there is the historic castle of Vauvenargues, the ruined castle of Puyricard, the hermitage of St. Honorat; and there are other mountainous hills with goat paths, gorges, and ravines, and also stretches of plain, watered now by the Arc or the Torse, now by the canal which François Zola planned. In his son's youth that canal had not yet transformed the thirsty expanse;

Photo by Martinet & Jouven

Dam and Reservoir of the Zola Canal

when Émile roamed the region with his friends "the red and yellow ochreous fields, spreading under the oppressive sun, were for the most part planted merely with stunted almond and olive trees, with branches twisted in positions which seemed to suggest suffering and revolt. Afar off, like dots on the bare stripped hills, one saw only the white-walled *bastides*, each flanked by dark, bar-like cypresses. The vast expanse was devoid of greenery; but on the other hand, with the broad folds and sharply defined tints of its desolate fields, it possessed some fine outlines of a severe, classic grandeur."[1]

Apart from the plain, but very characteristic of the region, were the Infernet gorges, near which François Zola planned one of his huge reservoirs. There one found "a narrow defile between giant walls of rock which the blazing sun had baked and gilded. Pines had sprung up in the clefts. Plumes of trees, appearing from below no larger than tufts of herbage, fringed the crests and waved above the chasm. This was a perfect chaos. With its many sudden twists, its streams of blood-red soil, pouring from each gash in its sides, its desolation and its solitude, disturbed only by the eagles hovering on high, it looked like some spot riven by the bolts of heaven, some gallery of hell."[2]

There were also the villages, whose houses, at times, were mere hovels of rubble and boards, some squatting amid muck-heaps, and dingy with woeful want; others more roomy and cheerful, with roofs of pinkish tiles. Strips of garden, victoriously planted amid stony soil, displayed plots of vegetables enclosed by quickset hedges. Much of the aridity of the region had arisen from the ruthless deforesting of the hills; formerly the falling leaves had spread rich vegetable soil over the mountain flanks, there had been good pasture for sheep where barren crags alone were left, and the climate, equalised by the moisture of the woods, had been less abrupt and violent in its changes.[1] Yet, in Zola's youth, as now, "wherever there was the smallest spring, the smallest brook, the glowing land still burst into powerful vegetation, and a dense shade prevailed, with paths lying deep and delightfully cool between plane trees, horse-chestnuts, and elms, all growing vigorously."[2]

---

[1] "Le Docteur Pascal."

[2] *Ibid.*

Those various scenes were a delight to Zola and his friends. "They craved for the open air, the broad sunlight, the sequestered paths in the ravines. They roamed the hills, rested in green nooks, returned home at night through the thick dusk of the highways. In winter they relished the cold, the frosty, gaily echoing ground, the pure sky, and the sharp atmosphere. In summer they always assembled beside the river — the willow-fringed Arc — for the water then became their supreme passion, and they spent whole afternoons bathing, swimming, paddling, and stretching themselves to dry on the fine sun-warmed sand. In the autumn they became sportsmen — inoffensive ones, for there is virtually no game, scarcely even a rabbit, in the district, and at the most one might bring down an occasional pettychap, fig-pecker, or some other small bird. But if, now and again, they fired a shot, it was chiefly for the pleasure of making a noise, and their expeditions always ended in the shade of a tree, where they lay on their backs, chatting freely of their preferences."[3]

---

[1] "The Athenæum," No. 3686, June 18, 1898, p. 785.

[2] "Le Docteur Pascal."

[3] Zola's "Documents Littéraires," p. 88 (abbreviated).

A little later, when Zola's young muse essayed her flight, he recalled those days of Provence, singing:

> "O Provence, des pleurs s'échappent de mes yeux
> Quand vibre sur mon luth ton nom mélodieux. . . .
> O région d'amour, de parfum, de lumière,
> Il me serait bien doux de t'appeler ma mère. . . .
> Autour d'Aix, la romaine, il n'est pas de ravines,
> Pas de rochers perdus au penchant des collines,
> Dans la vallée en fleur pas de lointains sentiers,
> Où, l'on ne puisse voir l'empreinte de mes pieds. . . .
> Écolier échappé de la docte prison,
> Et jetant aux échos son rire et sa chanson,
> Adolescent rêveur poursuivant sous tes saules
> La nymphe dont il croit voir blanchir les épaules,
> Jusqu'aux derniers taillis j'ai couru tes forêts,
> O Provence, et foulé tes lieux les plus secrets.
> Mes lèvres nommeraient chacune de tes pierres,
> Chacun de tes buissons perdus dans tes clairières.
> J'ai joué si longtemps sur tes coteaux fleuris,
> Que brins d'herbe et graviers me sont de vieux amis." [1]

Those rambles undoubtedly helped to rouse a sense of poetry in Zola and his companions. Besides providing themselves with provisions,—at times a small joint of raw mutton and some salad plants, which they cooked or dressed in the wilds,—they carried books, volumes of the poets, in their pockets or their bags. One year, 1856, Victor Hugo reigned over them like an absolute monarch. They were conquered by the majesty of his compositions, enraptured by his powerful rhetoric. His dramas haunted them like splendid visions. After being chilled by the classic monologues which they were compelled to learn by heart at the college, they felt warmed, transported into an orgy of quivering ecstacy, when they lodged passages of "Hernani" and "Ruy Blas" in their minds. Many a time, on the river-bank, after bathing, they acted some scenes together.[1] Indeed, they knew entire plays, and on the way home, in the twilight, they would adapt their steps to the rhythm of those lines which were sonorous like trumpet-blasts. But a day came when one of them produced a volume of Alfred de Musset's poems, the perusal of which set their hearts quivering. From that hour their worship for Hugo received a great blow, his lines fled from their memories, and Musset alone reigned over them. He became their constant companion in the hollows, the grottoes, the little village inns where they rested; and, again and again, they read "Rolla" or the "Nights," aloud.[2]

---

[1] Zola's "L'Aérienne" (1860) in Alexis, *l. c.*, p. 265 *et seq.*

Thus their young natures awoke to love. Cézanne and Baille were then about eighteen years of age; Zola was seventeen. But their aspirations remained full of ideality. There were a few brief, uncertain attempts at love-making, nipped in the bud by circumstances. Already, before the time we have now reached, Zola, or his musically minded friend Marguery, or perhaps both, had nursed a boyish flame for the fair-haired daughter of a local haberdasher, and had serenaded her in company, the former with his clarionet, the latter with a *cornet-à-piston,* until one evening the indignant parents emptied their water-jugs over them. Later Zola dreamt of encountering "fair beings in his rambles, beautiful maidens, who would suddenly spring up in some strange wood, charm him for a whole day, and melt into air at dusk."[3] And at last a young girl, Gratienne, flits by in the moonlight near the Clos des Chartreux, with her heavy tresses of raven hair resting on her young white neck;[1] but even she remains little more than a vision, and as yet, neither into Zola's life nor his friends' does woman, the real creature of flesh and blood, really enter, to achieve that work of disillusion by which she almost invariably destroys the youthful ecstacy which she, or her semblance, has inspired. Ninon, the Ninon of the "Contes,"[2] comes later. As yet she is only dreamt of, though the name by which she is to be known to the world is already suggested by an old gravestone in the cemetery, with only the word "Nina" remaining of its time-worn inscription:

---

[1] Zola's "Nos Auteurs Dramatiques," p. 42.

[2] "Documents Littéraires," p. 90.

[3] "L'Œuvre," Chap. II.

"Ami, te souviens-tu de la tombe noircie,
 Tout au bord d'une allée, à demi sous les fleurs,
 Qui nous retint longtemps, et nous laissa rêveurs?
Le marbre en est rongé par les vents et la pluie.
 Elle songe dans l'herbe et, discrête, se tait,
 Souriante et sereine au blond soleil de mai.

"Elle songe dans l'herbe, et, de sa rêverie,
 La tombe, chastement, à ceux qui passent là,
 Ne livre que le nom effacé de NINA.
 . . . .
 Ami, te souviens-tu, nous la rêvâmes belle,
 Et depuis, bien souvent, sans jamais parler d'elle,
 Nos regards se sont dit, dans un dernier regret:
 'Si je l'avais connue, oh! Ninette vivrait!'"[3]

But serious trouble was now impending in Zola's home. While he studied at the college, while his heart opened and his mind expanded, the position of his mother and grandparents gradually became desperate. All the savings, even the Auberts' funds, were exhausted; the lawsuits still dragged on, entailing heavy costs, which drained the home of all resources. Already in 1855, the rent in the Rue Bellegarde proving too heavy, it became necessary to take a cheaper lodging on the Cours des Minimes. Then, early in 1857, that also was found too dear; and two little rooms were rented at the corner of the Rue Mazarine. They overlooked the Barri,[1] a lane-like *chemin-de-ronde* encompassing the old town, with small and sordid houses on one hand, and the crumbling ramparts on the other.

---

[1] Zola's Verses, "À mes Amis" (Lycée St. Louis, 1858).

[2] Zola's first book, inspired largely by memories of Provence, and issued in Paris in 1864.

[3] Zola's "Nina," 1859. Readers of "La Fortune des Rougon" (which Zola wrote some ten years later) will remember that the old tombstone figures also in that work, in which the inscription is given as "Here lieth . . . Marie . . . died . . . ," the finger of time having effaced the rest. There is, however, an evident connection between the names Nina and Ninon, and perhaps they suggested Nana.

Here black ruin fell upon the Zolas and the Auberts. The aged but active grandmother toiled to the very last, managing the household, raising money on goods and chattels, resisting the wolf at the door with all the energy of despair. Bit by bit, every superfluous article of furniture was sold; remnants of former finery were carried to the wardrobe dealers, to obtain the means of purchasing daily bread and paying Émile's college fees. As for the lawsuits, they remained in abeyance from lack of funds. And blow following blow, poor Madame Aubert could at last resist no longer, but sickened and died. That happened in November, 1857. During the previous month Émile Zola had returned to the college, entering the second class. Towards Christmas his despairing mother started, alone, for Paris, to implore the help of some of the personages who had formerly favoured her husband. The old and almost helpless Monsieur Aubert remained at Aix with his young grandson, who, after an anxious period of suspense, received in February a letter from his mother, running much as follows:

---

[1] From the mediæval Latin, *barrium* (Ducange).

"It is no longer possible to continue living at Aix. Sell the little furniture that is left. You will in any case obtain sufficient money to enable you to take third-class tickets to Paris for yourself and your grandfather. Manage it as soon as possible. I shall be waiting for you."

Young Émile acted in accordance with those instructions, but he could not tear himself away from Aix and his friends without making with the latter a farewell excursion to Le Tholonet and the *barrage* of the canal reservoir planned by his father. When he at last took the train with old M. Aubert, his heart was heavy at the thought that he might never see Provence again. But in that respect his fears were not realised.

On reaching Paris, he found his mother residing at No. 63 Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, near the Luxembourg palace. She had obtained some assistance from friends, one of whom, Maître Labot,[1] recommended Émile to Désiré Nisard, the critic and historian, famous for having tried to demonstrate that there were two moralities; and Nisard speedily procured him a free scholarship at the Lycée or college of St. Louis. This was by Madame Zola's express wish, for, however great might be her misfortunes, she desired that her son might continue his studies.

But Paris now seemed a horrible place to the youthful Émile. All was gloom there. Orsini, Pieri, and Rudio had attempted the life of Napoleon III outside the opera-house a few weeks previously, and a kind of terror prevailed under the iron rule of General Espinasse and the new Law of

---

[1] See *ante*, p. 27.

Public Safety. Zola regretted the hills and the sun of Provence, the companionship of Baille and Cézanne; he felt lost among his new school-fellows, four hundred in number; and his poverty and shabbiness increased his bitterness of spirit, for the lads attending St. Louis were all more fortunately circumstanced than himself. That Lycée, which then faced the Rue de la Harpe — the transformation of the old Quartier Latin by the tracing of the Boulevard St. Michel being as yet uneffected — ranked third among the great colleges of Paris; and among those who had sat on its benches were the second Dr. Baron Corvisart, Gounod the composer, Egger the Hellenist and poet, Havet the Latinist and historian of early Christianity, and Nettement, whose account of French literature under the Restoration is still worthy of perusal. Other pupils, before Zola's time, were Henri Rochefort the erratic journalist and politician, Charles Floquet the advocate, who became prime minister of France; Dr. Tripier, one of the pioneers in the application of electricity to medicine, and the well-known General de Galliffet. Many of the professors also were able men who rose to eminence, and in such a college one might have thought that Zola would have made decisive progress.

As it happened, he not only got on badly with his school-fellows, — who on account of the southern accent he had acquired in Provence nicknamed him the "Marseillese," — but, yielding to a brooding spirit, he neglected his lessons. It was only in French composition that he occasionally distinguished himself. One day, it appears, when the allotted subject was "Milton dictating 'Paradise Lost' to his daughter," he treated it so ably that the professor, M. Levasseur, — the eminent historian of the French working classes, — publicly complimented him. Truth to tell, he now read a great deal, even in class time, still devouring the poets, but finding a delight also in Rabelais, Montaigne, and other prose authors. And he carried on an interminable correspondence with his friends in Provence, at times addressing them in verse, at others launching into discussions on philosophy, morals, and æsthetics. It was now, too, that he wrote his tale, "La Fée Amoureuse," which was therefore the earliest of his "Contes à Ninon," in which volume it afterwards appeared. Thus, in spite of his declared preference for a scientific career, his literary bent was steadily asserting itself.

At the end of his school year his only award was a second prize for French composition. Nevertheless, his mother, having scraped a little money together, allowed him to go to Provence for the vacation, which he spent with Baille and Cézanne. But on coming back to Paris in October he fell ill with a mucous fever of such severity that more than once a fatal issue was feared. When, after a period of convalescence, he returned to St. Louis, there entering the rhetoric class, two months had been lost and he still felt weak. Thus, though his new master, M. Lalanne, commended some of his work, notably his compositions, his progress was not great, particularly as his mind turned so frequently to Provence and his friends there, and hesitated between the scientific avocations of his choice and an increasing ambition to become a poet. When, however, the school year ended in August, 1859, his mother's position being as precarious as ever, he resolved to make an effort. He would skip the philosophy class and at once offer himself as a candidate for the degree of bachelor in sciences — that, or a corresponding degree in letters, being a necessary passport for eventual admission into the recognised professions or the government service.

The result of Zola's attempt was singular. In his written examination he proved very successful, his name appearing second on the list; but in the ensuing *vivâ-voce* examination, after securing good marks in physics, chemistry, and natural history, fair ones in pure mathematics, algebra, and trigonometry, he collapsed in literature and modern languages. He post-dated Charlemagne's death by five hundred years, scandalised the examiner by a romantic interpretation of one of La Fontaine's fables, and virtually confessed his utter ignorance of German. Thus his mark was zero; and though, it would seem, the examiners in sciences interceded in his favour with the examiner in *belles lettres,* the latter remained obdurate and would not modify the mark. Zola was therefore "sent back," for it was not allowable that a bachelor in sciences should be absolutely *nul en littérature.*[1]

Several years previously Alexandre Dumas *fils* had been "ploughed" for the very same reason. Two distinguished men of Zola's own generation, Alphonse Daudet and François Coppée, also failed to secure bachelors' degrees; yet, like Zola himself, they became eminent writers. Of course it is impossible to found any valid argument for or against degrees on a few isolated instances. It may be doubted, perhaps, whether they are any great recommendation to the literary man who is a dramatist or a novelist or a poet. But Zola's literary aspirations did not enter into his scheme when he offered himself for examination; he merely wished to secure a certificate, as it were, qualifying him for employment in one of the semi-scientific branches of the government service. In that respect his failure was a severe disappointment, particularly to his mother, who had set all her hopes upon him, and was distressed to find that the promise of his college days at Aix remained unfulfilled. At the same time, mother-like, she blamed the examiners more than she blamed him, and once more she provided him with enough money to spend the summer vacation in Provence.[1] A week after he had been "ploughed" at the Sorbonne, Zola was again roaming the hills, in a blouse and hob-nailed boots, accompanied by his usual intimates.

---

[1] Alexis, *l. c.*, pp. 40, 41.

There was also no little writing of poetry on Zola's part during those holidays, the influence of Musset still being in the ascendant, as is shown by a piece entitled "Rodolpho," in which one can further detect the change which Parisian life, particularly that of the Quartier Latin, where he had his home, was now effecting in the youth who had awoke, in Provence, to little more than ideal love. Musset likewise inspires some verses entitled "Vision," also dating from this time; but a perusal of the "Contes de La Fontaine," a book which no discipline seems able to keep out of French colleges, plainly suggested "Le Diable ermite," in which the good Abbé's erotic style was imitated only too successfully. Another piece, entitled "Religion," shows that the young versifier, the former winner of prizes for "religious instruction," was already losing his faith under the influence, no doubt, of Parisian surroundings. In this effort he is found calling on the Deity to manifest himself in order that he may believe in him, asking the why and the wherefore of things, and displaying a grim consciousness of the wretchedness of mankind. There are lines in this poem of his twentieth year which suggest the Zola of the last stage:

---

[1] It seems probable that he had already spent his Easter holidays there that year; for some of his verses, "Ce que je veux," are dated Aix, May, 1859. See Alexis, *l. c.*, p. 297.

> "Hélas ! que tout est noir dans la vallée humaine !
> Les hommes en troupeaux se parquent dans la plaine,
> Vivant sur des égouts, qu'entoure un mur croulant."

As his vacation drew to a close, Zola once more bestirred himself, and, after consultation with his friends, decided to make another attempt to secure the diploma which would prove an "open sesame" to regular employment. But he did not care to face the Paris examiners again; he preferred to try those of Marseilles, thinking, perhaps, that they might prove more indulgent. So, taking up his books to refresh his memory, he lingered in Provence till November. At Marseilles, however, even his comparative success in Paris was denied him. He failed with his preliminary papers and was not even summoned for the *vivâ-voce* examination. That defeat was decisive. When he returned to Paris he found his mother cast down by it; the friends who helped her had lost all faith in his ability. It was useless for him to return to the Lycée. In another four months he would be twenty years of age; he must no longer remain a burden on others, it was time for him to earn his own living. But how was he to do so? The outlook was gloomy indeed.

III

BOHEMIA — DRUDGERY — FIRST BOOKS

1860–1866

A clerkship at the Docks Napoléon — Peregrinations through the Quartier Latin — Zola joined there by Cézanne — He lives in a glass cage — "L'Amoureuse Comédie" — Poetry and poverty — "Genesis" — Spring rambles — The Quartier Latin in 1860 — Love in a garret — "La Confession de Claude," and the den in the Rue Soufflot — The fairy of one's twentieth year — Terrible straits — "Playing the Arab" — "Good for nothing" — Help from Dr. Boudet — Zola is engaged by M. Hachette and emerges from Bohemia — Hachette's authors and Zola — Fresh Peregrinations — Short stories — Zola's "band" — His correspondence with Antony Valabrègue — "Contes à Ninon" — Zola weaned from idyl and fable — "Madame Bovary" — Duality of Zola's nature — His improved circumstances — Newspaper articles — The lesson of "Henriette Maréchal" — "La Confession de Claude" published — Zola's opinion of it — Barbey d'Aurévilly's attack and a threatened prosecution — Zola quits Hachette's, and refuses to pander to fools.

After choosing a scientific career, and then aspiring to poetic fame as great as that of Hugo or Musset, to sink even momentarily to a junior clerkship, worth sixty francs a month,[1] at the "Docks" in the Rue de la Douane, was hard indeed. Yet such became Zola's fate. Some who have written of the episode have fallen into various errors. An American account says that the young man became a dock labourer; an English biographer has referred to his place of employment as a business house. But on consulting any plan of Paris as it was in 1860 or thereabouts, it will be seen that a great entrepôt, with offices for the collection of the state customs and the municipal dues, then adjoined the

---

[1] £2 8*s*.; or about $12.

"Docks Napoléon," where goods, coming into Paris by the St. Martin Canal, were landed. The establishment of this entrepôt and its adjuncts was carried out between 1833 and 1840;[1] the adjoining Rue de la Douane took its name from the enterprise; and it was there, then, that Zola, after failing at his examinations, secured employment as a clerk, the situation being found for him by his father's friend, Maître Labot, the advocate.

But the salary was the barest pittance. How could a young man of twenty live, in Paris, on two francs a day? Moreover, there was no prospect whatever of any "rise." At the expiration, therefore, of two months, — after trudging a couple of miles twice a day between the "Docks" and the Quartier Latin, passing on the road the great Central Markets, whose wondrous life he now began to observe, — Zola threw up this employment; and from the beginning of March, 1860, till the end of that year, then all through 1861, and the first three months of 1862, he led a life of dire Bohemian poverty. On arriving in Paris in February, 1858, he had lived with his mother at 63, Rue Monsieur-le-Prince. Thence, in January, 1859, they had moved to 241, Rue St. Jacques, a narrow and ancient thoroughfare, long one of the main arteries of Paris, intimately associated, too, with the student history of the original Quartier Latin. But in April, 1860, at the time when Zola quitted the "Docks," he and his mother found a cheaper lodging at 35, Rue St. Victor, another old street, on the slope of the "Montagne Ste. Geneviève," towards the Halle aux Vins and the Jardin des Plantes.

---

[1] Frédéric Lock's "Dictionnaire topographique et historique de l'ancien Paris," Paris, n. d. but *cir.* 1856.

Here Zola's room was one of a few lightly built garrets, raised over the house-roof proper, and constituting a seventh "floor"; the leads in front forming a terrace whence the view embraced nearly all Paris. While Zola was lodging here, living very precariously and trying by fits and starts to secure some remunerative work, his friend Paul Cézanne arrived from Aix with the hope of making his way in the art world of the capital. Cézanne was more fortunately circumstanced than Zola, having a small monthly allowance to depend upon; and it was perhaps by way of helping his friend that he at first took up his residence with him in that seventh-floor garret. Zola was wonderfully cheered by the companionship; before long he again became as enthusiastic as Cézanne, and the two friends dreamt of conquering Paris, one as a poet, the other as a painter.

When the summer arrived they often laid a paillasse on the terrace outside their attic, and spent the mild and starry night in discussing art and literature. Moreover, while Cézanne began to paint, Zola wrote another poem *à la* Musset, which he entitled "Paolo"; as well as a tale, "Le Carnet de Danse," which was subsequently included in "Les Contes à Ninon." But there was no improvement in his position. Indeed, things went from bad to worse; and in the autumn of the year, as he had too much delicacy to sponge on Cézanne, whose allowance, moreover, was only just sufficient for himself, they ceased to live together, though they remained close friends.

About the same time Zola and his mother separated. She, over a term of years, had now and again secured some trifling sum of money by compromising one or another lawsuit — sacrificing a considerable claim for little more than a morsel of bread. For the rest, she was helped by a few relatives of her own and by some friends of her deceased husband. In October, 1860, as her son could not as yet provide for her, she went to live at a *pension* in the Quartier Latin, assisted there, perhaps, by some friends, or else obtaining some employment in the house, for she was skilful with her needle. At all events, her son found himself for a time quite alone.

He now went to reside in the Rue Neuve St. Étienne du Mont, near the ancient church of that name, and his lodging, as usual, was at the very top of the house. This time it was a kind of belvedere or glass cage in which Bernardin de St. Pierre, the author of "Paul and Virginia," was said to have sought a refuge from the guillotine during the Reign of Terror. It was there, then, amid all the breezes of heaven, and inspired perhaps by the position of his retreat, that Zola wrote another poem, called "L'Aérienne," which he added to the pieces entitled "Rodolpho" and "Paolo," the first written at Aix, the second in the Rue St. Victor. These three compositions formed, as it were, a trilogy which he named "L'Amoureuse Comédie," — "Rodolpho" representing the hell, "L'Aérienne" the purgatory, and "Paolo" the paradise of love.[1] This done, he sought a publisher, or, as Paul Alexis puts it, he imagined he sought one.

As a matter of fact, this slim, pale-faced poet, in his twenty-first year, with an incipient beard and long hair falling over his neck, had become extremely timid in everything that pertained to ordinary life. He was not deficient in will power, but misfortune — repeated rebuffs of all sorts

---

[1] Portions of the three poems are printed by Alexis, *l. c.*

—had deprived him of the ordinary confidence of youth in his intercourse with others. His circumstances were desperate enough. Alexis, when telling us that he composed his poem "L'Aérienne" in his glass cage near the sky, during the terribly severe winter of 1860–1861, shows him fireless, shivering in bed, with every garment he possesses piled over his legs, and his fingers red with the cold while he writes his verses with the stump of a pencil.

How does he live? it may be asked. He himself hardly knows. Everything of the slightest value that he possesses goes to the Mont-de-Piété; he timidly borrows trifling sums of a few friends and acquaintances; he dines off a penn'orth of bread and a penn'orth of cheese, or a penn'orth of bread and a penn'orth of apples; at times he has to content himself with the bread alone. His one beverage is Adam's ale; it is only at intervals that he can afford a pipeful of tobacco; his great desire when he awakes of a morning is to procure that day, by hook or crook, the princely sum of three *sous* in order that he may buy a candle for his next evening's work. At times he is in despair: he is forced to commit his lines to memory during the long winter night, for lack of the candle which would have enabled him to confide them to paper.

Yet he is not discouraged. When "L'Aérienne" is finished, he plans another poetic trilogy, which he intends to call "Genesis." He is still at a loss for bread, but his chief concern is to beg, borrow, or, if possible, buy the books which he desires to study before beginning his new poems. At last he plunges into the perusal of scientific works, consults Flourens on such subjects as longevity, instinct and intelligence, genius and madness, dips into Zimmermann's account of the origin of mankind and the marvels of human nature, reads Lucretius and Montaigne again, and prepares a plan of his intended composition. The first poem is to narrate "The Birth of the World" according to the views of modern science; the second — to be called "Mankind" — is to form a synthesis of universal history; while the third, the logical outcome of the previous ones, is to be written in a prophetic strain showing "The Man of the Future" rising ever higher and higher, mastering every force of nature, and at last becoming godlike.

But though that stupendous composition is long meditated, only eight lines of it are actually written. The long winter ends, the spring comes, and Zola turns to enjoy the sun-rays — at times in the Jardin des Plantes, which is near his lodging, at others along the quays of the Seine, where he spends hours among the thousands of second-hand books displayed for sale on the parapets. And all the life of the river, the whole picturesque panorama of the quays as they were then, becomes fixed in his mind, to supply, many years afterwards, the admirable descriptive passages given in the fourth chapter of his novel "L'Œuvre." There it is Claude Lantier who is shown walking the quays with his sweetheart Christine. And Zola was certainly not alone every time that he himself paced them. We know to what a young man's fancy turns in springtime; and he was as human as others. He lived, moreover, in the Quartier Latin, which still retained some of its old freedom of life, in spite of the many changes it was undergoing.

Baron Haussmann had set pick and spade to work there, and many an ancient tenement and court had been swept away in piercing the Rue des Écoles and the Boulevard St.

Michel, then called "Boulevard Sebastopol, Rive Gauche." At that time the Chaumière was dead, the Prado also had disappeared, and the Closerie des Lilas — afterwards known as the Bal Bullier — had lately been renovated, in fact transformed, as Privat d'Anglemont recorded in one of the last sketches he wrote prior to his death in 1859. And with the disappearance or alteration of the old dancing places and *tabagies*, with the demolition of many an ancient den and haunt, the inhabitants of the Quartier and their manners and customs were likewise altering. In fact, there was a great crisis in *la vie de Bohême.* But though it was no longer such as it had been pictured by Murger, such as it had appeared to Théodore de Banville, who, recalling his youth, described it briefly yet forcibly a few years later,[1] it would be a mistake to imagine that it was altogether dead. Alphonse Daudet, who arrived in Paris from Nîmes a few months before Zola entered the Lycée St. Louis, has shown that many of the old habits and customs remained. Again, the writer of these pages, who knew the Quartier Latin well in the last years of the Second Empire, can recall that vestiges of its former life clung to it even till the war of 1870. There were still a few tenth-year students, still a few *rapins*, still a few *grisettes*, of a kind, lingering within its precincts. But the war proved the final *coup de grâce*; and the Quartier of the Third Republic with its *chic* students, its gambling hells, its *demi-monde*, its *filles de brasserie*, its garish vulgarity, its mock propriety, has resembled the old one in little save its studiousness; for, however much, for centuries past, its young men may have amused themselves, whatever their eccentricities, whatever their excesses, they have also studied, accumulated in that same Quartier a rich store of scholarship and science, which has enabled many of them to confer benefits on mankind.

---

[1] "Le Paris Guide par les principaux Écrivains de la France," Vol. II, Paris, 1867.

Zola, then, knew the former Quartier in its last lingering hours, when there were no longer any taverners who sold books for hard cash and bought them back for a snack or a drink, but when old clo'men still perambulated the streets, when La Californie and other *bibines* still existed on the confines, and when L'Académie, the grimy absinthe den, still flourished in the Rue St. Jacques under the patronage of *littérateurs* who never wrote, painters who never painted, and spurious students in law and medicine and what not besides. Those were the men of whom one said: "When they are not talking they drink, when they are not drinking they talk." How they lived nobody knew, but one of them, a notorious character, who after a few glasses of absinthe would improvise the most extraordinary comic songs with rattling tunes, slept for some years in a stable. He was turned out of it one winter, and a few days later was found frozen to death in the moat of the fortifications near Montrouge.

Zola, for his part, indulged in no such bibulous dissipation, but he elbowed it often enough. And in his distressful poverty, without guide or support, it was fatal that he should turn to such consolation as might be offered him. Thus he went the way of many another young man dwelling in the Quartier, finding at last a companion for his penury, not the ideal Ninon of whom he had dreamt in Provence, not the Musette nor the Mimi whom Murger portrayed with the help rather of his imagination than of his memory, but such a one as the Bohemia of the time still had to offer.

A glimpse of his life at that moment is given in a few early newspaper articles, and particularly in one of his first books, "La Confession de Claude," which pictured the shameless immorality prevailing in certain sets of the Quartier Latin, and the weakness that came upon even a well-meaning young man when cast into such a sphere. At the same time romance is blended with fact in the "Confession"; and it would be quite a mistake to regard Claude's mistress, Laurence, as a portrait of the young woman to whom Zola became attached. At the same time, the aspirations of his nature are well revealed in that book, which beneath some literary exaggeration remains instinct with the genuine disappointment of one who has found the reality of love very different from his dream of it.

Some passages are certainly autobiographical. The scene is a *maison meublée*, which stood near the Pantheon, in the Rue Soufflot before that street was widened and rebuilt. Zola betook himself thither on being expelled from his glass cage near St. Étienne du Mont for non-payment of rent. The house was tenanted by students, their mistresses and other women, and the life led there was so riotous and disorderly that more than once the police came down on the place and removed some of the female tenants to the prison of St. Lazare. Here, then, Zola gathered materials for "La Confession de Claude"; here he elbowed his characters Jacques, Paquerette, Laurence, and Marie, while sharing a life of the greatest privation with the companion who had come to him. "Provence, the broad, sunlit country-side, the tears, the laughter, the hopes, the dreams, the innocence and pride of the past had all departed; only Paris with its mire, a garret and its misery, remained."[1]

Again, real episodes find a place in the "Confession,"—memories of early days; rambles in the valley of the Bièvre, amid the fœtid stench of that sewer-like stream and the acreous odour of its tanneries; the first visit to the Closerie des Lilas, the disgust inspired there by the sight of all the harlots with their paint, their cracked voices, and their impudent gestures; and then the excursion through the waste lands of Montrouge, the paths and fields of Arcueil and Bourg-la-Reine, to Fontenay-aux-Roses, Sceaux, and the Bois de Verrières. But one need not imagine that this trip was made with such a creature as the callous, shameless, helpless Laurence; for, in recounting the episode elsewhere, Zola expressed himself as follows:

"I thought of my last excursion to Fontenay-aux-Roses with the loved one, the good fairy of my twentieth year. Springtime was budding into birth, the path was bordered by large fields of violets. . . . *She* leant on my arm, languishing with love from the sweet odour of the flowers. . . . Deep silence fell from the heavens, and so faint was the sound of our kisses that not a bird in all the hedges showed sign of fear. . . . We ascended to the woods of Verrières, and there, in the grass under the soft, fresh foliage, we discovered some tiny violets. . . . Directly I found a fresh one I carried it to her. She bought it of me, and the price I exacted was a kiss. . . . And now amid the hubbub of the Paris markets I thought of all those things, of all that happiness. . . . I remembered my good fairy, now dead and gone, and the little bouquet of dry violets which I still preserve in a drawer. When I returned home I counted their withered stems: there were twenty, and over my lips there passed the gentle warmth of my loved one's twenty kisses."[1]

---

[1] "La Confession de Claude," Nouvelle Édition, 1903, p. 141.

The man who has lived with a Laurence — the creature who robs youth of all its flame and degrades it to the mire — does not afterwards call her his good fairy. But whatever the *liaison*, whatever its origin and its ending, it was certainly marked by most distressful circumstances. As the winter of 1861 approached, Zola's poverty became terrible. It was then, as he afterwards told Guy de Maupassant,[2] that he lived for days together on a little bread, which, in Provençal fashion, he dipped in oil; that he set himself to catch sparrows from his window, roasting them on a curtain rod; and that he "played the Arab," remaining indoors for a week at a time, draped in a coverlet, because he had no garments to wear. Not only did he himself starve, but the girl who shared his poverty starved with him; and Paul Alexis and Maupassant and "Claude's Confession" relate how, at one moment of desperation, on a bitter winter evening, after an unbroken fast of thirty-six hours, he took off his coat on the Place du Panthéon and bade his tearful companion carry it to the pawnshop.

"It was freezing. I went home at the run, perspiring the while with fear and anguish. Two days later my trousers followed my coat, and I was bare. I wrapped myself in a blanket, covered myself as well as possible, and took such exercise as I could in my room, to prevent my limbs from stiffening. When anybody came to see me I jumped into bed, pretending that I was indisposed."

---

[1] See E. A. Vizetelly's Introduction to "The Fat and the Thin" ("Le Ventre de Paris") London, 1896. The original appeared in "Le Figaro,' November 20, 1866; and Zola reprinted portions of it, altered out of regard for his wife, in "Nouveaux Contes à Ninon," 1874.

[2] "Revue Bleue," March 10, 1883; and "Célébrités contemporaines," Vol. I, Paris, 1883.

Very little money can have been lent him on his few garments. He often used to say in after-life that the only coat he possessed in that year of misery ended by fading from black to a rusty green. Thus, when he went hither and thither soliciting employment, he was very badly received. "I gathered that people thought me too shabby. I was told, too, that my handwriting was very bad; briefly, I was good for nothing. . . . Good for nothing — that was the answer to my endeavours; good for nothing — unless it were to suffer, to sob, to weep over my youth and my heart. . . . I had grown up dreaming of glory and fortune, I awoke to find myself stranded in the mire."

But it is a long lane that has no turning. At the close of 1861, an eminent medical man, Dr. Boudet of the Academy of Medicine, who had either been connected with the Lycée St. Louis or had acted as one of the examiners when Zola had attempted to secure a bachelor's degree, gave the young man a letter of recommendation to M. Louis Hachette, the founder of the well-known publishing business. Zola called at the firm's offices, but, for the time, he could only obtain a promise of the first suitable vacancy. Meantime, Dr. Boudet, moved by the sight of his pitiable poverty, came to his help in an ingenious manner. On the occasion of a new year the Parisians of the more prosperous classes invariably exchange visiting cards, and the doctor asked Zola to distribute those which he intended for his friends. At the same time the worthy scientist slipped a twenty-franc piece into the young man's hand as remuneration for his trouble. This discreetly veiled charity at least saved Zola from actual starvation during the festive season; but his heart remained heavy, and his feelings were not devoid of envy when he found that several of the doctor's cards were addressed to the prosperous parents of his former school-fellows at St. Louis.

However, a month later, February, 1862, he entered the "Bureau du Matériel" at Hachette's establishment, his salary being fixed at a hundred francs a month, an average of 2*s.* 8*d.* per diem;[1] and his duties, during the first few weeks, being confined to packing books for delivery. A little later he was promoted to the advertising department, with a slightly increased salary. He was now at least "assured of daily bread. Naturally painstaking and conscientious, he had done with Bohemia for ever; he had begun life, he was saved."[2]

Yet it was only by force of will that he accustomed himself to a round of comparative drudgery. If Bohemianism implied poverty, it meant liberty also; and, like many of us, Zola found it hard to have to work regularly, at set tasks and set hours. Again, it worried him that he had no opportunity to read all the books that passed through his hands. But necessity compelled obedience to discipline, and he ended by discharging his clerkly duties fairly well, while allowing full rein to his literary bent every evening and every Sunday. He turned, however, from poetry to prose, not, it would seem, because he doubted his poetical faculty, but because after all his sufferings he was impatient for success. Until that success should arrive he felt, rightly enough, that for ten publishers who might be willing to buy a volume of his prose he would not find one inclined to risk money on a volume of his verse. Everything tends to show, indeed, that the dreamer of the belvedere in the Rue St. Étienne du Mont was awaking to full consciousness of the stern and often unjust laws of the modern world, that, enlightened, instructed by his sojourn in Bohemia, he was ripening into a practical man.

---

[1] About sixty-four cents, American currency.

[2] Alexis, *l. c.*, p. 56.

In the advertising department of Messrs. Hachette's business the young clerk became acquainted with some of the authors whose works were published by the firm. He only occasionally caught sight of such celebrities as Guizot, Lamartine, Michelet, Littré, and Duruy, the Minister of Public Instruction; but other writers dropped in to inquire what arrangements were being made for launching some forthcoming work, or how the sales of a recent book were progressing, for that also was a matter with which Zola had to deal. Among the men with whom he thus had some intercourse were miscellaneous writers like Francis Wey, travellers like Ferdinand de Lanoye, popular novelists like Amédée Achard, a dozen of whose fifty romances — largely of Dumas' semi-historical pattern — were published by Hachette. Then there was the scholarly Prévost-Paradol, to whom Zola was attracted, for he had been professor of French literature at the faculty of Aix before embracing journalism and becoming a leading exponent of Orleanist doctrines, — liberal, though scarcely democratic, views. His chief work, "La France Nouvelle," a classic for all who would study the condition of French society in the middle period of the nineteenth century, was not yet written; but Hachette already issued his "Études sur les Moralistes Français" and his "Essai sur l'Histoire Universelle."

Another visitor, one who called as a reviewer of the provincial press, not as an author, for he published his books elsewhere, was Duranty, a young novelist with an original, strongly marked personal talent, whose first book, "Le Malheur d'Henriette Gérard," had proved fairly successful, but who, in the end, failed to secure public recognition, though Zola became quite an admirer of his work — in a measure, perhaps, because it departed from most of the recognised canons and showed Duranty to be a man who, appreciated or not, followed his own bent and disdained to copy others.

But one of Hachette's leading authors at that time was Edmond About, the "nephew of Voltaire," who a few months before Zola was engaged by the firm had given it his vivid "Lettres d'un bon jeune homme," written *au pas de charge*, to the music, as it were, of a flourish of trumpets. Then, in 1862, in Zola's time, Hachette published About's fanciful "Cas de M. Guérin," and in the following year his novel "Madelon," which would be perhaps his best book had he not insisted unduly on its setting, with the result that it now seems somewhat old-fashioned. "Madelon," however, is to About what "La Dame aux Camélias" is to Dumas *fils*, "La Fille Élisa" to the Goncourts, "Sapho" to Daudet, and "Nana" to Zola. The young clerk read this book with keen and appreciative interest.

But of all the authors calling at his office, the one who most frequently lingered there to chat for a few minutes was the great critic Taine. He was then writing his "Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise" (1863–1864), and, on account, perhaps, of his contributions to the French reviews or of his "Philosophes classiques du XIX^e Siècle" he occasionally found letters awaiting him at Hachette's. These were handed him by Zola, in whose presence he opened them. At times they were simply abusive, at others they warned him to be careful of his soul, and in either case they were anonymous. But Taine on receiving any such missive merely laughed and shrugged his shoulders. "It is of no account," he would say, "it only comes from some poor benighted country priest. I am *anathema* to the village *curés*."

Zola received no help or encouragement from the authors he met at Hachette's, but this is not surprising; in the first years, at all events, they knew nothing of his literary proclivities, and he was too timid to reveal them. He had now moved from the den in the Rue Soufflot to an old house, a former convent, in the Impasse St. Dominique, near the Rue Royer Collard, where he occupied a monastic room, overlooking a large garden. Thence he betook himself to the Rue Neuve de la Pépinière, between the fortifications and the Montparnasse cemetery, over which the view from his window extended. But his peregrinations were incessant, and at the beginning of the winter of 1863 he moved again, this time to 7, Rue des Feuillantines, a turning out of the Rue St. Jacques. Nearly all his spare time was given to writing. Thinking of the Bohemianism from which he had lately emerged, he began his novel "La Confession de Claude"; then put it by for a time, and devoted himself to short stories. His "Fée Amoureuse"[1] had been printed in an Aix newspaper, "La Provence"; and he now (1863) secured the insertion of a story called "Simplice," and another, "Le Sang," in the "Revue du Mois," issued at Lille. Others followed: "Les Voleurs et l'Ane," reminiscent of Bohemia; "Sœur des Pauvres," written in full view of the Montparnasse cemetery; and "Celle qui m'aime," in which, after *féerie*, parable, and pure romance, a touch of realism first appeared in Zola's work. He sent this last tale to Henri de Villemessant for the latter's then weekly journal, "Le Figaro," but the manuscript came back "declined with thanks."

---

[1] See *ante*, p. 49.

Another attempt to secure the honours of print, this time with his poetic trilogy, "L'Amoureuse Comédie," proved equally unsuccessful. One Saturday evening, says Alexis, he timidly deposited the manuscript on M. Hachette's table, and on the Monday morning his employer sent for him. He had glanced at the poems, and though he was not disposed to publish them, he spoke to the young author in a kindly and encouraging manner, raised his salary to two hundred francs a month, and even offered him some supplementary work. For instance, he commissioned him to write a tale for one of his periodicals, one intended for children, and it was then that Zola penned his touching "Sœur des Pauvres"; but M. Hachette deemed it too revolutionary in spirit, and did not use it.

Zola's circumstances having now improved, he again sought a new home, and finding commodious quarters at 278, Rue St. Jacques, near the military hospital of the Val de Grâce, he took his mother to live with him. Her father, the aged M. Aubert, who, it seems probable, had retained or recovered some slender means in the course of the canal lawsuits, had died in 1862; but around the mother and her son were now gathered the latter's early friends, who, like him, had come from Aix to Paris. Paul Cézanne, Jean-Baptiste Baille, Marius Roux, and Solari, with Zola himself, formed a small, enthusiastic, ambitious band, such as was afterwards described so faithfully in "L'Œuvre." From time to time also, Antony Valabrègue, the future poet and critic, visited the capital, and on returning to Aix corresponded with Zola, whose letters[1] were very interesting.

One gleans from them that in 1864 Zola submitted some of his poetical pieces to L'Académie des Jeux Floraux of Toulouse, which "crowned" none of them; that he attended the evening literary lectures at the Salle des Conférences in the Rue de la Paix, and "reported," for some paper which is not specified, the accounts given of Chopin, "Gil Blas," Shakespeare, Aristophanes, La Bruyère's "Caractères," Michelet's "L'Amour" and the philosophy of Molière.[2] In April that year he had as yet done nothing with the various short stories to which reference has been made; and he thought of leaving them in abeyance while he completed the novel, "La Confession de Claude," which he had begun in 1862. Three months later, however, the stories were sold, and Zola wrote to Valabrègue: "The battle has been short, and I am astonished that I have not suffered more. I am now on the threshold: the plain is vast and I may yet break my neck in crossing it; but no matter, as it only remains for me to march onward I will march."

---

[1] "La Grande Revue," Paris, 1893, Vol. XXVI, pp. 1–19, 241–262.

[2] These lectures were given first in the Rue de la Paix, later in the Rue Cadet, and later still in the Rue Scribe. They were most interesting and instructive. The present writer often attended them in the last years of the Empire to hear Deschanel the elder, J. J. Weiss, Eugène Pelletan, Laboulaye, Legouvé, St. Marc-Girardin, Henri Martin, Sarcey, Wolowski, and others.

Besides the tales already enumerated, Zola's first volume, which opened with a glowing dedication to Ninon, the ideal love of his youth, — some passages being inspired, however, by the riper knowledge that had come to him from the more material love of Bohemian days, — included "Les Aventures du Grand Sidoine et du Petit Médéric," an entertaining fable of a giant and his tiny brother. Zola had sent his manuscript to M. Hetzel, then associated in business with M. Albert Lacroix, a scholarly man of letters who, a little later, founded the well-known Librairie Internationale and published several of the works of Victor Hugo: in return for which the great poet, whose own books were profitable, virtually compelled M. Lacroix to issue the works of his sons and his hangers-on, with the result that heavy losses frequently occurred.

Hetzel and Lacroix agreed to publish Zola's tales (under the collective title of "Contes à Ninon") without exacting anything for the cost of production; but the author was to receive no immediate payment. He, all eagerness to see his work in book-form, subscribed to every condition that was enunciated, and then ran home to tell his mother the good news. The volume was issued on October 24, 1864,[1] which became a red letter day in Zola's life. Writing to Valabrègue in the following January, he told him that more than half of the first edition (probably one of fifteen hundred copies) was then sold; and as the book at least made him known, procured him journalistic and literary work, he felt greatly inspirited, though he still remained at Hachette's, intending, he said, to keep his post for several years if possible, in order to increase "the circle of his relations." Meantime, as it was necessary he should "make haste, and rhyming might delay him," he left the Muse for ulterior wooing, — that is, if she should not then have grown angry, or have eloped with some more naïf and tender lover than himself. Briefly, as he was writing prose to his personal advantage, he intended to persevere with it.

---

[1] No date appears on the title of the first edition (18mo, 3 francs), which bears the imprints of Hetzel and Lacroix, and Poupart-Davyl & Co., Printers.

It may be said of Zola's first volume that it was gracefully, prettily written; that more than one of the tales contained in it was a poem in prose. Brimful of the author's early life in Provence, his youthful fancies and aspirations, those "Contes à Ninon" gave no warning of what was to follow from his pen. And yet at the very time of writing most of them he was being weaned from romance and fable and idyl. Not only had he taken considerable interest in About's "Madelon," but he had been studying Balzac, and particularly Flaubert's "Madame Bovary," the perusal of which had quite stirred him. A man had come, axe in hand, into the huge and often tangled forest which Balzac had left behind him; and the formula of the modern novel now appeared in a blaze of light. When "Madame Bovary" was issued in 1860, the average Parisian, the average literary man even, regarded it merely as a *succès de scandale.* Many of those who praised the book failed to understand its real import; and when Flaubert was satirised in the popular theatrical *révue,* "Ohé! les petits Agneaux," half Paris, by way of deriding him, hummed the trivial lines sung by the actress who impersonated "Madame Bovary":

Photo by C. Martinet

Émile Zola's Home, Impasse Sylvacanne, Aix-in-Provence

Qu'importe ! c'est officiel,
Ou vit quatre éditeurs me suivre :
Oui, Paul, Mathieu, Pierre, et Michel
Voulurent imprimer mon livre ! . . .
Craignant mes excentricités
Mathieu ne vit pas mon mérite ;
Paul ne vit pas mes qualités,
Pierre ne vit pas mes beautés,
Mais Michel les vit
Mais Michel les vit[1]
Tout de suite ! "

Zola, however, did not laugh or jeer at "Madame Bovary"; he felt that a literary evolution might be at hand, as is shown by his subsequent correspondence with Valabrègue. The struggle which was to last all his life, one between his reason and his imagination, was beginning, if indeed it had not begun previously; for the oscillation which one observes in his writings between romanticism and realism — or naturalism as the latter became in its advanced stage — would indeed seem to be only a continuation of what had happened in his school days, when, in spite of proficiency in literary subjects, he had elected to follow a scientific course of study, in the midst of which, however, his literary bent had still and ever asserted itself. Novalis has said: "Every person who consists of more than one person is a person of the second power — or a genius." If that be true, then Zola was certainly a genius; for there were always two men in him. And, in any case, those who desire to understand him aright should never lose sight of the duality of his nature.

But at the stage of his career which one has now reached, the realist, the naturalist, had not fully arisen. We find him appearing in Zola's next book, "La Confession de Claude," and in sundry newspaper articles, which, like the "Confession," were issued in 1865. After working ten hours a day at Hachette's, the young man, on returning to his home — which in the year mentioned was first at 142, Boulevard Montparnasse, near a shooting gallery which prevented him from working, and a little later at 10, Rue de Vaugirard, where he had a balcony overlooking the Luxembourg gardens — at once turned to the "Confession," or else to the press-work he had secured. Every week he wrote an article of from one hundred to one hundred and fifty lines for the "Petit Journal," and often another, running from five to six hundred lines for the "Salut Public," then the chief organ of the Lyons press. The former newspaper paid him twenty francs for each article; the latter, from fifty to sixty francs. Thus he now made an average of two hundred francs a month by his pen.[1] It was also at this period that he contributed a few short tales, notably "La Vierge au Cirage," to that somewhat *demi-mondain* periodical "La Vie Parisienne," and that he wrote a one-act comedy, "La Laide," which he sent to the Odéon Theatre, whose manager declined to stage it.

---

[1] A pun on the name of the publisher, Michel Lévy. It must be admitted that while the authors of "Ohé ! les petits Agneaux" scoffed at Flaubert, they gave him a splendid advertisement.

But the articles in the "Salut Public" attracted attention, and Zola afterwards reprinted some of them in a volume called "Mes Haines." The germ of the Zola of later times will be found in several of those early papers. The one on Taine is perhaps the best; and, when one remembers that it was written by a young man in his twenty-fifth year, the real understanding and critical insight which it discloses appear all the more creditable. Another notable article was a bold, disdainful review of Napoleon III's "Histoire de Jules César," containing, in the usual veiled language of the times, the first indication that Zola held Republican opinions. Again, two articles on "Le Supplice d'une Femme" and the Dumas-Girardin scandal connected with that tragedy are in their way interesting, while another on the "Germinie Lacerteux" of Edmond and Jules de Goncourt is particularly noteworthy as showing the progress of Zola's evolution towards naturalism in literature.

---

[1] Zola to Valabrègue, February 6, 1865.

This article was favourable to the book, whose authors it pleased; and some communications having been exchanged, the young journalist secured a seat for that famous first performance of "Henriette Maréchal," which ranks as one of the most uproarious nights in the history of the Comédie Française. The audience, Zola tells us,[1] began to hiss before the curtain rose; the storm burst forth at the first words spoken by the actors. The opening scene, laid at the opera-house on the night of a masked ball, scandalised the old *habitués* of the Comédie. Modern masqueraders and slang in the home of Racine and Corneille! What sacrilege! But the greatest opposition to the piece came from the young Republicans of the time, who were not influenced by the merits or faults of the play, but simply by the fact that its performance at the Comédie was due to the influence of the Emperor's cousin, the Princess Mathilde.

Yet whatever might be the public dislike of that member of the reigning house, to whom a horrid nickname was currently given, whatever the notoriety of her *liaison* with the Count de Nieuwerkerke, the "Superintendent of

---

[1] "Les Romanciers Naturalistes," Paris, 1881, p. 238.

Fine Arts," it was somewhat hard for the Goncourts that their play should be rendered responsible for her lapses. But good came out of evil, as the saying goes; if "Henriette Maréchal" was hissed off the stage, the *fracas* made the Goncourts famous. Two nights of uproar contributed more to popularise their name and to win readers for their works than years of zealous toil. They had long been esteemed in literary circles, but hitherto they had remained unknown to the great public. Their novels, like their historical works, had secured no large sales, whereas now all was altered, and the change, and the circumstances which wrought it, produced a deep impression on Émile Zola, confirmed him in the view which he had already begun to entertain, that fame in the modern literary world depended largely on a resounding *coup-de-pistolet*.

He was fairly well pleased with the result of his volume of "Contes," but prior to the "Henriette Maréchal" scandal[1] he had already declared that he would greatly have preferred a severe "slating" to some of the milk-and-water praise of his reviewers. As he wrote to Valabrègue, however, he lived in the hope that his next book, "La Confession de Claude," would almost "decide his reputation." It was published by Lacroix, on November 25, 1865,[2] at the Librairie Internationale, which he had now established in conjunction with a Flemish *confrère*, Verboeckhoven; and this time the arrangement with Zola was that the latter should receive a royalty of ten per cent, or thirty centimes,[1] for every copy sold. As, however, only fifteen hundred copies were printed, the sale of the entire edition represented less than twenty pounds[2] for the author; and it so happened that the book was not reissued till 1880.

---

[1] The first performance took place on December 5, 1865.

[2] Though "1866" appears on the title-page, the above is the exact date of publication and registration at the Ministry of the Interior. Alexis is therefore in error when he says the book appeared in October. The question of date has some importance in connection with Zola's departure from Hachette's and the cause thereof.

From this it might be inferred that it proved an absolute failure; but such was hardly the case. Certainly it was not a perfect book. Zola himself afterwards wrote that the observer occasionally vanished from its pages, allowing the poet to appear, a poet who had drunk too much milk and eaten too much sugar. "It was not," said he, "a virile work; it was the cry of a weeping, rebellious child." But with all its faults it bore the impress of sincerity; Daudet's "Sapho," though far superior as literature, leaves one cold when one turns to it after perusing Zola's feverish pages. If the public did not rush to buy the "Confession," the critics, at all events, paid it considerable attention, and several assailed it unmercifully. For instance, Barbey d'Aurévilly, writing in the "Nain Jaune," declared that its "hero" was a toad, and that the author had simply spun out, over three hundred and twenty pages, what Cambronne, who commanded the Old Guard at Waterloo, had expressed in a single word. But what particularly roused Zola's ire was that "le Catholique hystérique," as he subsequently nicknamed Barbey d'Aurévilly, maliciously referred to the "Confession" as "Hachette's little book," whereas that firm had nothing to do with it. Zola therefore addressed a letter of protest to the "Nain Jaune."[3]

---

[1] About 3*d.*; or six cents (American).

[2] Say $100.

[3] R. H. Sherard's "Émile Zola: A Biographical and Critical Study." London, 1895, pp. 52, 53.

But he had already decided to sever his connection with his employers. Since the death of M. Louis Hachette in the summer of 1864, the young man's position in the firm had been growing difficult. His superiors looked askance at his literary efforts, as if they thought that he wrote stories and articles in the time for which they paid him. Moreover, as they themselves did not deal in revolutionary literature, they did not care to have one of their clerks associated with such work. "La Confession de Claude" seemed to them too outspoken; and a few days after its publication, that is, at the end of November, 1865, one of the partners said to Zola: "You earn two hundred francs a month here. It is ridiculous! You have plenty of talent, and would do better to take up literature altogether. You would find glory and profit in it."[1]

Zola took the hint (conveyed pleasantly enough) and gave notice to leave at the end of the following January. And he was the better pleased at having adopted that course, and having averted, perhaps, a direct dismissal, as a few weeks after the appearance of "La Confession de Claude" the Procureur Impérial, otherwise the public prosecutor, influenced by certain reviews of the book, caused some inquiries to be made at Hachette's with respect to its author. No prosecution ensued, and "Madame Bovary" having escaped scot free, it is extremely doubtful if one would have succeeded even in those days of judicial subserviency to the behests of the authorities, particularly as, whatever might be the subject-matter of the "Confession," it was instinct throughout with loathing and censure of the incidents it narrated. In any case, Zola, on writing to Valabrègue early in January, 1866, with thoughts, perhaps, of "Henriette Maréchal" and the Goncourts in his mind, was by no means alarmed or cast down. If, said he, the "Confession" had damaged him in the opinion of respectable folk, it had also made him known; he was feared and insulted, classed among the writers whose works were read with horror. For his part, he did not mean to pander to the likes or the dislikes of the crowd; he intended to force the public to caress or insult him. Doubtless, indifference would be loftier, more dignified; but he belonged to an impatient age, and if he and his fellows did not trample the others under foot, the others would certainly pass over them, and, personally, he did not desire to be crushed by fools.

---

[1] Fernand Xau's "Émile Zola." 12mo, 68 pages, Paris, 1880.

And now, then, having published two volumes, the first fairly well received, the second virulently attacked, he quitted Hachette's, to give himself up entirely to journalism and literature.

IV

IN THE FURNACE OF PARIS

1866–1868

Henri de Villemessant, the Barnum of the Parisian press — His papers, "L'Événement" and "Le Figaro" — The first interviews in French journalism — Millaud and Timothée Trimm — Girardin's fresh idea every day — Zola inaugurates "Literary Gossip" — A glance at French literature in 1866 — Zola, Littré, and Michelet — Zola's first impression of Alphonse Daudet — The Librairie Nouvelle and the Librairie Internationale — Zola and the Open-Air School of Art — Léopold Tabar and "L'Œuvre" — Zola's articles on the Salon of 1866 — The great sensation in the art-world — A holiday at Bennecourt — "Le Vœu d'une Morte" — "Marbres et Plâtres" — "La Madeleine" — A "definition of the novel" — Hard times — Zola in love — More writings on art — "Les Mystères de Marseille" — "Thérèse Raquin" — Arsène Houssaye and his moral tag — Ulbach and "putrid literature" — Ste.-Beuve's criticism and Zola's reply — "Les Mystères de Marseille" as a play — "La Honte," otherwise "Madeleine Férat" — First idea of the Rougon Macquarts.

One of the best-known Parisians of those days was Henri de Villemessant, a man typical of the period, with something of Barnum and Balzac's "Mercadet" in his composition. He was the son of one of the first Napoleon's dashing plebeian colonels by a young woman of noble birth, whose name he had to take and retain, after engaging in an unsuccessful lawsuit to prove the legitimacy of his birth and thereby secure a right to the name of his father. Coming to Paris as a young man, in the early days of Louis Philippe's reign, Villemessant conceived the idea that a fortune might be made by running a fashions journal on new lines; and, under the patronage of La Taglioni, the famous ballet dancer, he founded one called "La Sylphide," in which dressmakers and their creations, hairdressers and their restorers, corsets and cosmetics, in fact "beautifiers" of every description, were puffed in a skilful and amusing manner. "La Sylphide" did not make Villemessant a millionaire, but the money and the experience he acquired in conducting it launched him into a very successful career. In the days of Charles X. there had been a newspaper called "Le Figaro," which had died as many newspapers die. The title having lapsed, anybody could appropriate it, and Villemessant, finding it to his liking, did so. He started, then, a weekly journal called "Le Figaro," which at first was devoted largely to things theatrical, and in particular to the charms, the wit, and the merits of actresses, not forgetting those of the *demi-monde.*

The contents of "Le Figaro," in its early period, were often scurrilous; unpleasant stories were current respecting the means by which paragraphs of green-room gossip were inserted or suppressed; but Villemessant, paying no heed, went his way, prosperous and rejoicing. In course of time, like many another adventurer, he assumed some semblance of respectability, and imparted a literary touch to his journal. But, as its questionable days were still too recent for many folk to take to it, he decided to start, or rather revive for a time, another derelict newspaper, "L'Événement," which he made a non-political morning daily.

Villemessant had a remarkable scent for *actualité* and talent. Almost every French writer popular from 1864 onward, contributed for a time to "L'Événement" or to "Le Figaro," which eventually took the other journal's place. Villemessant liked to capture his contributors young, when they were beginning to show their mettle, run them for a year or two, then toss them aside in order to make room for other promising *débutants.* From special circumstances a few men remained with him till the last, but the number of those whose connection with Villemessant's journals proved as brief as brilliant, was extraordinary. It may be said of him that if he did not originate he at least accentuated the personal note in French newspaper writing; and, in conjunction with his *collaborateur,* Adrien Marx, he was certainly the very first to introduce the "interview" into European journalism.[1] Later he became the sponsor of Henri Rochefort, who did so much to demolish the Second Empire.

It was into the hands of Villemessant that Zola fell on quitting Hachette's. He, Zola, had already had some dealings with another singular and prominent newspaper promoter, Millaud, the first to produce a popular halfpenny daily in Paris, "Le Petit Journal," in whose columns Léo Lespès, a Parisian hairdresser, achieved journalistic celebrity as "Timothée Trimm." There was as much of a Barnum in Millaud as there was in Villemessant, but while the former was a thorough Hebrew Jew, the latter was a Christian one, who, whenever it suited his purpose, could be a liberal paymaster. And, besides, his manners were pleasant, even jovial; his greatest vice being an extreme partiality for the pleasures of the table, in which respect his contemporaries contrasted him with Dr. Véron, another famous newspaper man of those times, saying, "Véron is a *gourmet,* and Villemessant a glutton."

---

[1] This was in the early sixties. Marx, who "interviewed" the boyish Prince Imperial, Baron James de Rothschild, M. de Lesseps, and many others, collected his articles in a volume entitled, "Indiscrétions Parisiennes."

Emile de Girardin, the father of the modern French press, who at the period one has now reached, 1866, was conducting a paper called "La Liberté," which had little influence in Paris, had made himself responsible, in Louis Philippe's time, for a fresh idea every day — not, it must be said, altogether successfully, for many of the ideas which he enunciated were mere paradoxes. Villemessant, who owed much to Girardin, was an equally great believer in novelty; but being less versatile, and suffering, moreover, from a laborious digestion, which consumed much of his time, he did not often have ideas of his own. So he purchased those of others. He had taken a wife while he was yet in his teens, and had two daughters, one married to his musical critic, Jouvin, the other to a M. Bourdin, who attended to some of his business matters, such as advertising and puffery. Bourdin called upon the Paris publishers, and at Hachette's offices he met Zola. The latter, having decided to quit the firm, told Bourdin of an idea he had formed; it was communicated to Villemessant, who at once offered to give Zola a trial.

The matter was very simple, and will even appear trivial to present-day English and American journalists. Under the title of "Books of To-day and To-morrow," Zola proposed to contribute a variety of literary gossip to "L'Événement," after the style of the theatrical gossip, already printed by that and other newspapers. Though publishers' puffs appeared here and there, nobody had previously thought of doing for books and writers what many were already doing for plays, operas, actors, and especially actresses. The innovation took Villemessant's fancy; and Zola, quitting Hachette's on January 31, 1866, published his first gossip in "L'Événement" two days later. In one important respect his articles differed from the theatrical gossip of the time. Much of the latter was paid for by managers or performers; whereas Zola neither sought nor accepted bribes from authors or publishers, but looked to "L'Événement" for his entire remuneration. As mentioned previously, he had been engaged on trial, and thus no actual scale of payment had been arranged. When at the end of a month he called upon the cashier at "L'Événement" office he was both amazed and delighted to receive five hundred francs.[1]

Villemessant, for his part, was well pleased with the contributions. Though the time was not one of exceptional literary brilliancy, it had its interesting features, and the activity in the book-world was the greater as the first period of the Second Empire, that of personal rule, had not yet quite ended; the second period, that of the so-called "Empire libéral," dating only from the ensuing year, 1867. The French still possessed few liberties, the Government kept a strong curb on the political newspapers that were tolerated, and thus literature at least had a chance of attracting that wide attention of which politics so often despoil it. But it was also a degenerate time, the time of Clodoche at the opera-balls, of Offenbach's "Orphée" and "La Belle Hélène." Only a few months previously (November, 1865), Victorien Sardou had produced his "Famille Benoîton," one of the very best of his many theatrical efforts, a stinging but truthful satire of some of the manners of the day, such as they had become in the atmosphere of the imperial *régime.*

---

[1] Alexis, *l. c.*, p. 67.

To the conditions of the time may be largely attributed certain features of its journalism, and of at least one branch of its literature, fiction. Again and again the most prominent articles in the majority of the Paris newspapers (only five or six of which were serious political organs) dealt with such women as Cora Pearl, Giulia Barucci, Anna Deslions, and Esther Guimond; such men as Worth, the dressmaker, Markowski, the dancing master, Gramont-Caderousse, the spendthrift, and Mangin, the charlatan. The average boulevardian novel beautified vice, set it amid all the glamour of romance. The adulterous woman was an angel, the courtesan quite a delightful creature, her trade a mere *péché mignon.* The lovers, the seducers, were always handsome, high-minded, exceptionally virile, irresistible; while the deceived husbands were of every kind,— odious, tragic, pathetic, *débonnair,* or simply ridiculous. And every "intrigue" was steeped in an odour of musk and suffused with a cloud of *poudre-de-riz.*

At the same time some of the great writers of the July Monarchy were still living. But if Hugo, the Olympian veteran, showed little sign of decay, either with his "Chansons des Rues et des Bois," or his "Travailleurs de la Mer," Dumas the elder was now at his last stage, and George Sand, bound by an agreement to the "Rĕvue des Deux Mondes," was deluging its readers with the mere milk and water of "Laura" and similar productions, though she treated others — as a result, perhaps, of the vitiated taste of the hour — to such strong and unsavoury meat as "Elle et Lui," to which Paul de Musset retorted with his pungent *relevé,* "Lui et Elle." The recluse of Nohant was to produce good work yet, but that she herself should publicly flaunt the least excusable of her many *amours* was sad and repulsive.

Meantime other great workers, as diligent as she, were steadily pursuing their lifework. Littré, whom Zola knew slightly, for Hachettes were his publishers, and on whom he called in his modest second-floor rooms in the Rue d'Assas, was continuing his great dictionary of the French language,[1] and making his first attempt to enter the Academy, to be foiled, however, by the frantic bigotry of Bishop Dupanloup, whereas those minor lights, Camille Doucet and Prévost-Paradol, secured without difficulty the honours of election. Then Littré's neighbour, Michelet, — another of Hachette's authors — whose quiet *soirées* Zola, like other young literary men, occasionally attended, was completing his History of France. And there was much activity among historical writers generally, and, in particular, a large output of books throwing light on phases and personages of the great Revolution.

At that period also a little band of so-called Parnassian poets, inspired, some by Leconte de Lisle, and others by Baudelaire, but, for the most part, gifted with little breadth of thought, was imparting to French verse an extreme literary polish, at times attaining real beauty of expression, and at others lapsing into a *préciosité*, which neither sonority of sound nor wealth of imagery could save from being ridiculous. Meanwhile, in dramatic literature, Ponsard was producing his version of "Le Lion Amoureux," and Augier his "Contagion," the latter's success being due, however, more to political reasons than to any intrinsic merit.[2] Then, in fiction, if Edmond About seemed to have run to seed prematurely with his interminable novel, "La Vieille Roche," Octave Feuillet was writing his best book, "Monsieur de Camors." And if the historical novel, as Dumas had conceived it, had declined to mere trash, those well-known literary partners, Erckmann-Chatrian, by transforming it and dealing exclusively with the period of the Revolution and the First Empire, were achieving repeated successes, their popularity being the greater among the Parisians on account of the Republican spirit of their writings. Then the foibles of the time were vividly illustrated by Taine's amusing "Graindorge," and Droz's "Monsieur, Madame, et Bébé," the last as strange a medley of immorality, wit, and true and honest feeling as ever issued from the press. But there was no redeeming feature in the nonsensical stories of semi-courtesans to which the brilliant Arsène Houssaye had declined; no shade of literary merit in the wild, unending romances with which Ponson du Terrail harrowed the feelings of every Parisian doorkeeper and apprentice. Perhaps the best serial writer of the time was Émile Gaboriau, for though his style was devoid of any literary quality, he was ingenious and plausible, and by the exercise of these gifts raised the detective novel of commerce from the depths in which he found it.

---

[1] The first volume had appeared in 1863.

[2] Napoleon III. and his wife attended the first performance at the Odéon

But a delightful story-teller was coming to the front in the person of young Alphonse Daudet, who, since his arrival in Paris some nine years previously, had made his way sufficiently well to secure the performance of a one-act

(March, 1866), and when Got, one of the performers, had occasion to exclaim, "England, the land of liberty!" nearly the entire audience, composed of the intellectual leaders of Paris, rose and applauded tumultuously, in spite of the Emperor's presence. He was deeply impressed by this demonstration.

comedy, "L'Œillet blanc," at the Comédie Française, and of another, "La Dernière Idole," at the Odéon. He had also contributed to "Le Petit Moniteur," — a one-sou adjunct of the official journal — in whose columns he signed either "Baptiste" or "Jehan de l'Isle." Further, he had begun his familiar "Tartarin" under the title of "Le Don Quichotte provençal"; and he gave his charming "Lettres de mon Moulin" to "L'Événement," at the very time when Zola was providing that journal with literary gossip. The young men met occasionally at the offices as well as at Villemessant's country house at Seine-Port, and Zola was greatly struck by Daudet's handsomeness, — "his abundant mane of hair, his silky, pointed beard, his large eyes, slender nose, and amorous mouth, the whole illumined by a ray of light, instinct with a soft voluptuousness, in such wise that his face beamed with a smile at once witty and sensual. Something of the French *gamin* and something of the woman of the East, were blended in him."[1]

But Daudet and Zola, afterwards such good friends, did not become intimate at this time. They merely elbowed one another on a few chance occasions, then followed the different roads they had chosen, roads which seemed likely to part them for ever, but which ended by bringing them as near one to the other as their natures allowed.

In those days one of the institutions of literary and boulevardian Paris was the Librairie Nouvelle, which had been founded in 1853 or 1854, at the corner of the Boulevard des Italiens and the Rue de Grammont, by a M. Bourdilliat, who subsequently sold the enterprise to Michel Lévy, the well-known publisher. This Librairie Nouvelle was both a publishing and a book-selling centre, and was much patronised by literary men, who made it a kind of lounge, meeting there of an afternoon, towards the absinthe hour, and again at night when the theatres closed. You might meet there such men as the two Dumas, the Goncourts, Paul de Musset, Nestor Roqueplan, Gautier, About, Lambert-Thiboust, Jules Noriac, a brilliant *chroniqueur*, who never went to bed till sunrise, Xavier Aubryet, who combined literature with business, penning prose as full of sparkle as the champagne he sold, and Dr. Cerise, a fashionable and eccentric medical man, who shrewdly "physicked" his lady patients with amusing books. Chatrian also came to the Librairie Nouvelle, with Offenbach, Clésinger, Auber, Halévy, and Meilhac; and among all these one might occasionally espy amiable diplomatists like the Chevalier Nigra and the Prince de Metternich, the husband of "the wittiest woman of the age."

---

[1] Zola's "Les Romanciers Naturalistes," Paris, Charpentier, 1881 *et seq.*

Now, when M. Albert Lacroix, the publisher of Zola's "Contes à Ninon" and "Confession de Claude," established the Librairie Internationale, in a very similar position, that is at the corner of the Boulevard Montmartre and the Rue Vivienne, he wished to make it a literary centre of the same description as the Librairie Nouvelle. And he largely succeeded in his endeavour, attracting many patrons of the older establishment, and drawing numerous others around him. Indeed, the Librairie Internationale became almost a revolutionary centre; for besides issuing many translations of foreign works, such as those of Grote, Buckle, Dean Merivale, Bancroft, Motley, Prescott, Gervinus, Duncker, and Herder, it published many of the writings of Hugo and Michelet, Eugène Pelletan and Edgar Quinet, Lamartine and Laveleye, Jules Simon, Ernest Hamel, and Proudhon, — briefly of men whose principles were opposed to those of the Second Empire.[1] Occasionally M. Lacroix was led into hot water by his democratic tendencies; as, for instance, when he incurred fine and imprisonment for issuing Proudhon's annotated edition of the Gospels, whereupon he became so alarmed that for some time he would not continue the publication of Hamel's whitewashing of Robespierre, of which he had already issued the first volume. In fiction he was often venturesome; for he not only produced "Manette Salomon" and "Madame Gervaisais" for the Goncourts, but he issued "Le Maudit" and other notorious volumes by the Abbé * * *, — really the Abbé Michon, — an author whom Zola did not hesitate to "slate" in a provincial newspaper, though Lacroix was his own publisher. "Disgust," he wrote, "rises to the lips when one reads these novels[2] floundering through filth, as vulgar in form as they are in thought, and pandering to the gross appetites of the multitude. One must assume that all this vileness and vulgarity is intentional on the author's part: he has written for a certain public and has served it the spicy and evil-smelling *ragoûts* which he knows will please it."

On the other hand, calling now and again at the Librairie

---

[1] The present writer can speak of these matters from personal knowledge; he well knew M. Bourdilliat, the founder of the Librairie Nouvelle, and afterwards connected for many years with "Le Monde Illustré," which Frank Vizetelly helped to establish, and of which he was the first editor. As for the Librairie Internationale, it became the commercial agency of the "Illustrated London News," which Henry Vizetelly (the writer's father) represented in Paris for several years.

[2] "Le Maudit" was followed by "La Réligieuse," "Le Jésuite," "Le Moine," etc., all of these books having very large sales in Paris.

Internationale, Zola there acquired no little information which became useful for his contributions to "L'Événement," besides making the acquaintance of various literary men. But his old friends remained his favourite ones, and Cézanne, the painter, ranked foremost among them. He, Cézanne, had become a fervent partisan of the new school of art, the school which Zola called that of the Open Air, and which led to Impressionism. Zola himself had strong artistic leanings and sympathies; he spent hours in the studio of his friend, who introduced him to several other young painters, first Guillemet, then Édouard Béliard, Pissarro, Claude Monet, Degas, Renoir, Fantin-Latour, — as well as Théodore Duret, art critic and subsequently historian — with all whom he often discussed art at the famous Café Guerbois at Batignolles. A little later, Guillemet and Duranty the novelist,[1] with whom Zola had kept up an intercourse since leaving Hachette's, introduced him to Édouard Manet, the recognised leader of the new school; and in all likelihood Zola, about the same time, came across the unlucky Léopold Tabar, a born colourist, whom Delacroix had favoured and helped.

Tabar produced one striking and almost perfect painting, a "Saint Sebastian," but the rest of his life was consumed in ineffectual efforts. His sketches were admirable, but he could never finish a picture, and his failures were accentuated by his constant ambition to produce something huge, something colossal. Yet for years he was regarded as a coming great man. He had failed with his last picture, no doubt, but his next would be a masterpiece. He died at last in misery. And so much of his story corresponds with that of Zola's novel, "L'Œuvre," that it seems certain the author must have met the unfortunate painter, and have blended his life with that of Cézanne and others when preparing his study on the art-world of Paris.[1]

---

[1] See *ante*, p. 66.

It was undoubtedly because Zola found himself thrown so much among the young painters of the new school that he asked Villemessant to let him write some critical articles on the Salon of 1866, a request which the editor of "L'Événement" seems to have granted readily enough. It is a curious circumstance that scores of prominent French authors, including famous poets, historians, novelists, and playwrights, have written on one or another Salon at some period of their careers. It used to be said in Paris, half in jest, half in earnest, that nobody could aspire to literary fame of any kind without having criticised at least one of the annual fine-art shows in the Champs Elysées. In any case the admission of "non-professionals," so to say, among the critics, has been beneficial with respect both to the quality of art and the diffusion of artistic perception in France. It has more than once led painting out of the beaten track, checked the pontiffs of narrow formulas, encouraged the young, helped on the new schools. At times the professional art critic has found his harsh dogmas and slavish traditions shattered by the common sense of his non-professional rival. In England it happens far too often that the same men write on art in the same jargon and in the same newspapers and periodicals for years and years. In the long run, they fail to interest their readers: they are for ever repeating the same things. They cannot appreciate any novelty: their vision has become too prejudiced. And they exercise no healthy, educating, vivifying influence. It is no wonder, then, that the diffusion of artistic culture in England should proceed very slowly.

---

[1] The above passage corrects and supplements the particulars given by the writer in the preface to the English translation of "L'Œuvre," edited by him. "His Masterpiece," by E. Zola, London, Chatto and Windus, 1902.

Of course, even in France, the partisans of old and recognised schools do not immediately welcome a new one. For the most part they defend their acquired position with all the vigour they possess. And the battle may go on for some years before a new formula triumphs, soon to find, perhaps, yet another one preparing to challenge its hard-earned victory. When Zola, whose eyes treasured memories of the bright sunlight of Provence, who could recall the limpid atmosphere of the hillsides that girdled Aix, entered the lists to do battle for the new realists of that time he encountered a terrific opposition. It had been arranged with Villemessant that he should write from sixteen to eighteen articles, passing the entire Salon in review; but he penned and published seven only — the first two, which dealt with the exhibition jury and its system of admitting and excluding pictures, being written prior to May 1, the opening day. These articles, which accused the jury of manifest injustice in excluding Édouard Manet, and almost every artist who shared his tendencies, created quite an uproar in the Parisian art-world, which increased when a third article denounced the absolute mediocrity of some eighteen hundred and ninety of the two thousand pictures which had been "hung." A fourth article, in vindication of Manet and his methods, and a fifth praising Claude Monet's "Camille," and attacking Vollon, Ribot, Bonvin, and Roybet as spurious realists, brought matters to a climax. Villemessant and Zola himself were assailed with letters of complaint, some hundreds of readers (inspired for the most part by the artistic enemies of the "Open-Air" school) demanding the critic's immediate dismissal or withdrawal. Zola's articles, it may be said, were signed with the *nom de plume* of "Claude," — in memory, no doubt, of "Claude's Confession," and in anticipation of the "Claude Lantier" of "L'Œuvre," — nevertheless, his identity having been divulged, he was freely abused by the critics of rival newspapers, and was even threatened with a duel.

At that time, it should be mentioned, Édouard Manet, whose high talent needs no praise nowadays, was generally regarded as a mystifier, an impudent scamp who delighted to play jokes with the public, and it followed that this man Zola, who defended him, must be either another mystifier or else a mere ignorant jackass. Villemessant, however, less alarmed than amused by the storm which had been raised, was unwilling to dismiss him. In lieu thereof he decided to run a second series of articles on the Salon, one of the orthodox type, by Théodore Pelloquet, which it was thought would counterbalance the revolutionary utterances emanating from Zola. But this decision, although almost worthy of Solomon, did not satisfy the readers of "L'Événement." They would not have Zola as art critic at any price, and so he brought his campaign to an end after two more strongly written articles. In the first, truthfully enough, and in a regretful spirit, he pointed out the decline of Courbet, Millet, and particularly Théodore Rousseau, whose pictures that year were of an inferior quality, while, in the second, after attacking Fromentin for painting Oriental scenes with plenty of colour, but with an absolute lack of light, he turned the now-forgotten Nazon's sunsets into ridicule, and dismissed Gérome and Dubuffe with a few stinging words. On the other hand, he praised Daubigny, Pissarro (then a newcomer among the realists), and Corot, observing of the last, however, that he would like his work far better if he would only slaughter the nymphs with which he peopled his woods, and set real peasants in their places. And he wound up as follows, in words which, applied to much of his after-life, were almost prophetic: —

> "In these articles I have defended M. Manet as, throughout my life, I shall always defend every frank personality that may be assailed. I shall always be on the side of the vanquished. There is always a contest between men of unconquerable temperaments and the herd. I am on the side of the temperaments, and I attack the herd. Thus my case is judged, and I am condemned. I have been guilty of such enormity as to fail to admire M. Dubuffe, after admiring Courbet — the enormity of complying with inexorable logic. Such has been my guilt and simplicity that I have been unable to swallow without disgust the *fadeurs* of the period, and have demanded power and originality in artistic work. I have blasphemed in declaring that the history of art proves that only temperaments dominate the ages, and that the paintings we treasure are those which have been lived and felt. I have committed such horrible sacrilege as to speak with scant respect of the petty reputations of the day and to predict their approaching demise, their passage into eternal nothingness. I have behaved as a heretic in demolishing the paltry religions of coteries and firmly setting forth the great religion of art, that which says to every painter: 'Open your eyes, behold nature. Open your heart, behold life.' I have also displayed crass ignorance because I have not shared the opinions of the patented critics, and have neglected to speak of the foreshortening of a torso, the modelling of a belly, draughtsmanship and colour, schools and precepts. I have behaved, too, like a ruffian in marching straight towards my goal without thinking of the

poor devils whom I might crush on the way. I sought Truth and I acted so badly as to hurt people while trying to reach it. In a word, I have shown cruelty, foolishness, and ignorance, I have been guilty of sacrilege and heresy, because, weary of falsehood and mediocrity, I looked for men in a crowd of eunuchs. And that is why I am condemned."

Such writing as this was bound to ruffle many dovecotes. There had previously been various efforts on behalf of the new school of painting, the complaints of injustice having led one year to the granting of a Salon des Réfusés, but never had any writer hit out so vigorously, with such disregard for the pretentious vanity of the artistic demigods of the hour. If, however, Zola was banished from "L'Événement" as an art critic, he was not silenced, for he republished his articles in pamphlet form,[1] with a dedicatory preface addressed to Paul Cézanne, in which he said: "I have faith in the views I profess; I know that in a few years everybody will hold me to be right. So I have no fear that they may be cast in my face hereafter." In this again he was fairly accurate: at least several of the views then held to be not merely revolutionary but ridiculous have become commonplaces of criticism.

Though this campaign did not improve Zola's material position, it brought him into notoriety among the public, and gave him quite a position among the young men of the French art-world. At this time he still had his home in the Rue de Vaugirard, overlooking the Luxembourg gardens, but in the summer of 1866 he was able to spend several weeks at Bennecourt, a little village on the right bank of the Seine, near Bonnières, and — as the crow flies — about half-way between Paris and Rouen. Here he was joined at intervals by some of his Provençal friends, Baille, Cézanne, Marius Roux, and Numa Coste;[1] and they roamed and boated, rested on the pleasant river islets and formed the grandest plans for the future, while Paris became all excitement about the war which had broken out between Prussia and Austria. The crash of Kœnigsgratz echoed but faintly in that pleasant valley of the Seine, among those young men whose minds were intent on art and literature. But politically the year was an important one for France, for, from that time, the Franco-German War became inevitable. The Napoleonic *prestige* was departing. The recall of the expeditionary force from Mexico had become imperative. In vain did the unhappy Empress Charlotte hasten to Paris and beg and pray and weep; Napoleon III, who had placed her husband Maximilian in his dangerous position, would give him no further help, and she, poor woman, was soon to lose her reason and sink into living death.

---

[1] "Mon Salon," Paris, Librairie Centrale, 1866, 12mo, 99 pages. The articles are also given in the volume entitled "Mes Haines" (Charpentier and Fasquelle).

The year which had opened so brightly for Zola was to end badly for him also. After shocking the readers of "L'Événement" as an art critic, he imagined he might be more successful with them as a story writer. So he proposed a serial to Villemessant, who after examining a synopsis of the suggested narrative, accepted the offer. The story which Zola then wrote was called "Le Vœu d'une Morte," but it met with no more success than the art criticisms, and after issuing the first part, Villemessant stopped the publication. The second part was never written; yet the abortion — for it was nothing else — was issued in volume form,[1] and of recent years has even been translated into English,[2] and reviewed approvingly by English critics! Zola himself always regarded it as the very worst of his productions. "What a wretched thing, my friend!" he remarked in a letter to M. George Charpentier twenty years after this story's first appearance. "Nowadays young men of eighteen turn out work ten times superior in craftsmanship to what we produced when we were five and twenty."

---

[1] M. Coste, who is well known as a *publiciste* in France, should have been mentioned earlier in this work. Though not so intimate with Zola as Baille and Cézanne, he knew him in his school days. He largely helped Paul Alexis in the preparation of the latter's biographical work on Zola.

This second failure to catch the public fancy injured Zola considerably in the opinion of Villemessant, but the latter continued to take various articles from him, such as a series of literary character-sketches, entitled "Marbres et Plâtres," in which figured such men as Flaubert, Janin, Taine, Paradol, and About. These articles were merely signed "Simplice," — Zola's name having become odious to the readers of "L'Événement," — and portions were worked by the author into later studies on French literary men.

About this time Villemessant found himself in serious difficulties with the authorities, through having sailed too near to politics in a journal only authorised for literature and news. "L'Événement" was suppressed, but its editor turned "Le Figaro" into a daily organ, and Zola's services were transferred to the latter journal. He contributed to it a number of Parisian and other sketches, portions of which will be found under the title "Souvenirs," in a second volume of "Contes à Ninon," published in 1874.

---

[1] "Le Vœu d'une Morte," Paris, Faure, 1866, 18mo. Reissued by Charpentier, 1889 and 1891.

[2] "A Dead Woman's Wish," translated by Count C. S. de Soissons, London, 1902.

In the latter part of 1866 his pecuniary position was a declining one. As he wrote to his friend, Antony Valabrègue, he found himself in a period of transition. He had penned a pretty and pathetic *nouvelle,* "Les Quatre Journées de Jean Gourdon," for "L'Illustration,"[1] but he was chiefly turning his thoughts to dramatic art, going, he said, as often as possible to the theatre — with the idea, undoubtedly, that, as he had failed to conquer Paris as an art critic and a novelist, he might yet do so as a playwright. The young man was certainly indomitable; after each repulse he came up, smiling, to try the effect of another attack. Already in 1865, although his comedy, "La Laide," had been declined by the Odéon Theatre, he had started on a three-act drama, called "La Madeleine," and this now being finished he sent it to Montigny, the director of the Gymnase Theatre, who replied, however, that the play was "impossible, mad, and would bring down the very chandeliers if an attempt were made to perform it." Harmant of the Vaudeville also declined "La Madeleine," but on the ground that the piece was "too colourless," from which, as Alexis points out, one may surmise that he had not troubled to read it.

After this experience Zola slipped his manuscript into a drawer and turned to other matters. In December, 1866, he is found informing Valabrègue that he has received a very flattering invitation to the Scientific Congress of France,[2] and asking him, as he cannot attend personally, to read on his behalf a paper he has written for it. This was a "definition of the novel," prepared, said Zola, according to the methods of Taine,[1] and it embodied at least the germs of the theories which he afterwards applied to his own work. When writing to Valabrègue on the subject he was in a somewhat despondent mood, for his position on "Le Figaro" had now become very precarious. He wished to undertake some serious work, he said, but it was imperative that he should raise money, and he was "very unskilful in such matters." Indeed, in spite of every effort, he did not earn more than an average of three hundred francs a month. Nevertheless, he still received his friends every Thursday, when Pissarro, Baille, Solari, and others went "to complain with him about the hardness of the times."[2] And he at least had a ray of comfort amid his difficulties, for he was now in love, was loved in return, and hoped to marry at the first favourable opportunity. The young person was tall, dark haired, very charming, very intelligent, with a gift, too, of that prudent thrift which makes so many Frenchwomen the most desirable of companions for the men who have to fight for position and fame. Her name was Alexandrine Gabrielle Mesley; before very long she became Madame Zola.

---

[1] "L'Illustration," December 15, 1866, to February 16, 1867. The story is included in the "Nouveaux Contes à Ninon," 1874.

[2] It must have been held, we think, at Marseilles or Aix.

In 1867 Zola put forth a large quantity of work. Early in the year he quitted "Le Figaro," and bade good-bye to the Quartier Latin, removing to Batignolles, quite at the other end of Paris; his new address being 1, Rue Moncey, at the corner of the Avenue de Clichy. He was now near his artistic friends of Montmartre, and complained to Valabrègue of having only painters around him, without a single literary chum to join him in his battle. His association with artists led, however, to the production of a fresh study on Manet,[1] and to another abortive effort to write a "Salon," this time in a newspaper called "La Situation," which the blind, despoiled King of Hanover had started in Paris for the purpose of inciting the French against the Prussians. This journal was edited by Édouard Grénier, a *publiciste* and minor poet of the time, who was well disposed towards Zola; but the latter's articles again called forth so many protests, that Grénier, fearing the newspaper would be wrecked when it was barely launched, cast his contributor overboard.

---

[1] The substance of the paper was worked into the articles which Zola collected in the volume entitled "Le Roman Expérimental," Paris, 1880 *et seq.*

[2] "La Grande Revue," May, 1903, p. 254.

Zola fortunately had other work in hand, having arranged with the director of a Marseillese newspaper, "Le Messager de Provence," to supply him with a serial story, based (so Zola wrote to Valabrègue), on certain criminal trials, respecting which he had received such an infinity of documents that he hardly knew how to reduce so much chaos to order and invest it with life. He hoped, however, that the story, which he called "Les Mystères de Marseille," might give him a reputation in the south of France, even if from a pecuniary standpoint it provided little beyond bread and cheese, the remuneration being fixed at no more than two *sous* a line. That, perhaps, was full value for such matter; at all events the London Sunday papers and halfpenny evening journals often pay no more, if indeed as much, for the serials they issue nowadays, the majority of which are no whit better than was Zola's tale. It was not literature certainly; but it was clearly and concisely written, and generally good as narrative, in spite of some sentimental mawkishness and sensational absurdity. As often happens with hack work of this description the tale opens better than it ends. Long, indeed, before it was finished, the writer had grown heartily tired of it, as many of its readers must have perceived. At the same time it was not a work to be ashamed of, particularly in the case of an author fighting for his daily bread; and Zola, when at the height of his reputation, showed that he was not ashamed of it, for on his adversaries casting this forgotten "pot boiler" in his face, he caused it to be reprinted, with a vigorous preface, in which he recounted under what circumstances the story had been written.[1]

---

[1] First issued in the "Revue du XIX^e Siècle"; afterwards in pamphlet form by Dentu, with a portrait of Manet by Bracquemond, and an etching of Manet's "Olympia" by the painter himself. The text was reprinted in the volume, "Mes Haines."

The money paid for it had been very acceptable to him, for it had meant an income of two hundred francs a month for nine months in succession; and it had enabled him to give time to some real literary work, the writing of his first notable novel, "Thérèse Raquin." This he had begun in 1866; the idea of it then being suggested to him by Adolphe Belot and Ernest Daudet's "Vénus de Gordes," in which a husband is killed by the wife's lover, who, with his mistress, is sent to the Assizes. Zola, for his part, pictured a similar crime in which the paramours escaped detection, but suffered all the torment of remorse, and ended by punishing each other. An article, a kind of *nouvelle* which he contributed to "Le Figaro" on the subject, led him to develop this theme in the form of a novel. In parts, "Thérèse Raquin," as the author afterwards remarked, was neither more nor less than a study of the animality existing in human nature. It was, therefore, bound to be repulsive to many folk. But if one accept the subject, the book will be found to possess considerable literary merit, a quality which cannot be claimed for Émile Gaboriau's "Crime d'Orcival," with which it has been compared by Mr. Andrew Lang. Gaboriau was a clever man in his way, but he wrote in commonplace language for the folk of little education who patronised the *feuilletons* of "Le Petit Journal." No French critic, except, perhaps, the ineffable M. de Brunetière, who has declared the illiterate Ponson du Terrail to be infinitely superior to the Goncourts, would think of associating Gaboriau's name with that of Émile Zola.

---

[1] Besides appearing serially in "Le Messager de Provence," "Les Mystères de Marseille" was issued in parts (16mo) by Mengelle of Marseilles, 1867-1868; and in volume form (with preface) by Charpentier, Paris, 1884. Both "La Lanterne" and "Le Corsaire," of Paris, published the story serially after the Franco-German War. In the latter journal it was called "Un Duel Social," by "Agrippa," under which title it was again issued in parts (12mo) for popular consumption. There is an English translation: "The Mysteries of Marseilles," translated by Edward Vizetelly. London, Hutchinson & Co., 1895 *et seq.*

Under the title of "Un Mariage d'Amour," "Thérèse Raquin" was published during the summer and autumn of 1867, in Arsène Houssaye's review, "L'Artiste," which paid Zola the sum of six hundred francs[1] for the serial rights. There was some delay and difficulty in the matter. Houssaye, who was *bien en cour*, as the French say, and desirous of doing nothing that might interfere with his admission to the Tuileries, informed Zola that the Empress Eugénie read the review, and on that ground obtained his assent to the omission of certain strongly worded passages from the serial issue. But the author rebelled indignantly when he found that Houssaye, not content with this expurgation, had written a fine moral tag at the end of the last sheet of proofs. Zola would have none of it, and he was right; yet for years the great quarrel between him and his critics arose less from the outspokenness with which he treated certain subjects than from his refusal to interlard his references to evil with pious ejaculations and moral precepts. But for all intelligent folk the statement of fact should carry its own moral; and books are usually written for intelligent folk, not for idiots. In the case in point the spectacle of Arsène Houssaye, a curled, dyed, perfumed ex-lady killer, tendering moral reflections to the author of "Thérèse Raquin," was extremely amusing. Here was a man who for years had pandered to vice, adorned, beautified, and worshipped it, not only in a score of novels, but also in numerous semi-historical sketches. For him it was all "roses and rapture," whereas under Zola's pen it appeared absolutely vile. In the end Houssaye had to give way, and the moral tag was deleted.

---

[1] £24 or about $120. Houssaye had previously paid Zola a third of that amount for his study on Manet (see *ante*, p. 101), and the money had reached the young author just in time to enable him to save his furniture from being seized and sold by a creditor.

Zola took his story to M. Albert Lacroix, who in the autumn of 1867 published it as a volume. Naturally it was attacked; and notably by Louis Ulbach, a writer with whom Zola frequently came in contact; for Ulbach did a large amount of work for Lacroix, and was often to be met at the afternoon gatherings at the Librairie Internationale. It was he who had initiated the most popular book of that year: Lacroix's famous "Paris Guide by the principal authors and artists of France"; but at the same time he did not neglect journalism, and just then he was one of the principal contributors to "Le Figaro," for which he wrote under the pseudonym of "Ferragus." In an article printed by that journal he frankly denounced "Thérèse Raquin" as "putrid literature," and Zola, with Villemessant's sanction, issued a slashing reply. This certainly attracted attention to the book, with the result that a second edition was called for at the end of the year, which had not been a remunerative one for the bookselling world, for it was that of the great Exhibition when Paris, receiving visits from almost every ruler and prince of Europe, gave nearly all its attention to sight-seeing and festivity.[1]

Zola had sent a copy of his book to Ste.-Beuve, for whom, as for Taine, he always professed considerable deference, though he reproached him somewhat sharply for having failed to understand Balzac, Flaubert, and others. Ste.-Beuve, having read "Thérèse Raquin," pronounced it to be a "remarkable and conscientious" work, but objected to certain of its features. Some years afterwards Zola had occasion to refer to this subject, and the remarks he then penned[2] may be quoted with the more advantage as they embody his own criticism of his book:—

"I had sent 'Thérèse Raquin' to Ste.-Beuve, and he replied to me with a critical letter, in which I find that desire for average truth, of which I have just spoken. Nothing could be fairer than that criticism. For instance, he remarked of my description of the Passage du Pont Neuf [the chief scene of the novel]: 'It is not accurate, it is a fantastic description, like Balzac's of the Rue Soli. The passage is bald, commonplace, ugly, and, in particular, narrow, but it has not the dense blackness, the shades *à la Rembrandt* which you impute to it. This also is a way of being unfaithful [to the truth].' He was right; only it must be admitted that places merely have such mournfulness or gaiety of aspect as we may attribute to them. One passes with a shudder before the house where a murder has just been committed, and which seemed quite commonplace only the previous day. None the less, Ste.-Beuve's criticism holds good. It is certain that things are carried to the point of nightmare in 'Thérèse Raquin,' and that the strict truth falls short of so many horrors. In making this admission I wish to show that I perfectly understand and even accept Ste.-Beuve's standpoint of average truth. He is also right when he expresses his astonishment that Thérèse and Laurent [the wife and lover] do not content their passion immediately after the murder of Camille [the husband]; the case is open to argument, but in the ordinary course of things they would live in each other's arms before being maddened by remorse. It will be seen then that, in spite of my own books, I share this respect for logic and truth, and do not try to defend myself against criticism which seems quite just. Yes, certainly, it is a bad thing to forsake the substantial ground of reality to plunge into exaggerations of draughtsmanship and colouring."

---

[1] "Thérèse Raquin," Paris, Librairie Internationale: 1st edition, 1867; 2d, 1868; 3d, 1872; 4th and 5th, 1876; 6th, 7th, etc., Charpentier, 1880, 1882, etc. Illustrated editions: Marpon, 8vo, 1883; Charpentier, 32mo, 1884. Popular edition at 60 centimes: Marpon, 16mo, 1887. English translations: (1) anonymous, Vizetelly & Co., *cir.* 1886–1889; (2) by Edward Vizetelly, London, Grant Richards, 1902.

[2] "Le Voltaire," August 10–14, 1880. See also "Documents Littéraires," by É. Zola, Paris, Charpentier (and Fasquelle), 1881 *et seq.*

About the time of the publication of "Thérèse Raquin" Zola at last obtained the coveted honours of the footlights. In conjunction with his friend Marius Roux he wrote a drama based on his "Mystères de Marseille," and the director of the Marseillese Gymnase consented to stage it. It is possible that this arrangement was effected during a visit which the director made to Paris, for, according to some accounts, a trial performance of the play took place in the capital.[1] Zola and Roux, being anxious to witness its production at Marseilles, afterwards repaired thither, and superintended the last rehearsals; but their hopes were scarcely fulfilled, for although, as Alexis points out rather naïvely, the first performance [2] "proceeded fairly well, enlivened by only a little hissing," no more than two others were ever given. And while it is true that a "run" could hardly be expected in a provincial city, particularly in those days, three solitary performances, followed by no revival, could not be interpreted as signifying success.

Perhaps it was the failure of this effort that caused Zola to abandon for some years all hope of making his way as a dramatic author. Judging by the comparative success of "Thérèse Raquin," novel writing seemed the safer course for him. Accordingly, he transformed his rejected play, "La Madeleine," into a novel, which he entitled "La Honte," and offered as a serial to a certain M. Bauer, who had established a new "Événement." Bauer accepted it, but its minute descriptions of the working of sensual passion in a woman shocked his readers, and the publication ceased abruptly. On the whole, this story, written in a large degree on the same lines as "Thérèse Raquin," was not a good piece of work. When Lacroix published it, however, in volume form, under the title of "Madeleine Férat," it soon went into a second edition.[3]

This was the chief literary work accomplished by Zola in 1868, when he also published a variety of articles in different Paris newspapers. And as his books were now selling fairly well, he began to think of giving some fulfilment to an old and once vague project, to which the example of Balzac's works had at last imparted shape. Writing in May, 1867, to his friend Valabrègue, he had then said: "By the way, have you read all Balzac? What a man he was! I am reperusing him at this moment. To my mind, Victor Hugo and the others dwindle away beside him, I am thinking of a book on Balzac, a great study, a kind of real romance."

---

[1] Théâtre Beaumarchais, October 17, 1867.

[2] October 27, 1867.

[3] "Madeleine Férat," Paris, Librairie Internationale, 1st and 2d editions, 1868; 3d, Marpon and Flammarion, 1878; 4th, Charpentier, 1880; new edition, Charpentier, 1892, etc. Popular edition at 60 centimes, Marpon, 1891. English translation: Vizetelly & Co., *cir.* 1888.

That book was never written, but the perusal of "La Comédie Humaine" and its haunting influence at least largely inspired "Les Rougon-Macquart."

V

THE FIRST "ROUGON-MACQUARTS"

1868–1872

The Goncourts, Zola, and his proposed "family history" — Origin of this idea — Degeneration and heredity — Zola's agreement with M. Lacroix — He begins "La Fortune des Rougon" — His intercourse with Meurice, Coppée, etc. — His work on "Le Rappel," "La Tribune," "Le Gaulois" — Sincerity of his democratic views — Goncourt's allegation that he would have sold his pen to the Empire — Some venal French journalists — Zola's marriage and opinion of the married state — His home in the Rue de La Condamine — "Le Siècle" and "La Fortune des Rougon" — "La Curée" begun — Zola takes his ailing wife to Provence — Outbreak of war with Germany — Zola and military service — He conducts a newspaper at Marseilles, becomes Secretary to Glais-Bizoin at Bordeaux, and is offered a Sub-Prefecture — His chances as a state functionary — He reverts to journalism and literature — His work on "La Cloche" and "Le Corsaire" — Publication of "La Fortune des Rougon" — The public prosecutor and "La Curée" — Its issue in book form — Failure of Zola's publisher, Lacroix — The novelist's dire distress — The wool of his mattresses sold to buy bread — He is recommended by Théophile Gautier to M. Charpentier — His "slop" clothes and his new publishing contract — M. Charpentier's generous honesty — How Zola passed from penury to affluence.

It has been mentioned already that when the Goncourts' novel, "Germinie Lacerteux," was published in 1865, some little correspondence took place between Zola and the authors, they being really grateful to him for the favourable review of their work which he had contributed to "Le Salut Public," of Lyons. They told him that he alone had understood the book, that his frankness consoled them for much of the literary hypocrisy of the times, and that they admired his courage in daring to confess his likings.[1] Subsequently, wishing to become personally acquainted with

---

[1] "Lettres de Jules de Goncourt," etc., Paris, 1885, p. 219. (Letter dated February 27, 1865.)

Zola, they called on him, but found him absent. In February, 1868, however, still remembering his article on their book, they wrote to him in praise of "Thérèse Raquin," in which they detected the hand of an artist, one who had probed human truth and crime to the core.[1]

From Alexis's account it has been inferred by several writers that Zola and the Goncourts became intimate in 1865; but the latter's "Journal" shows, peremptorily, that they did not actually meet till December 14, 1868,[2] when Zola lunched with the brothers at their house on the Boulevard Montmorency, at Auteuil. This time the approaches probably came from Zola.[3] The Goncourts were preparing their novel "Madame Gervaisais," and he, with the idea of writing an anticipatory article on it, seems to have applied for information, whereupon he was invited to the Goncourts' house. They had pictured him as somewhat of a *Normalien*, a pedagogue, and they found him sickly, nervous, anxious, deep, intricate, in fact almost a riddle! He told them of the difficulties of his position, admitted that his novel, "Madeleine Férat," ran off the rails and ought to have been limited to three characters; complained of having to conform to idiotic editorial opinions in some articles he was then contributing to "La Tribune," a weekly opposition journal, and expressed a keen desire to find a publisher who, over a term of six years, would pay him a sum of thirty thousand francs for eight novels, in which the history of a family would be recounted.[4] This history, of course, was

---

[1] "Lettres de Jules de Goncourt," p. 273 (February 5, 1868).

[2] "Journal des Goncourt," Paris, 1888, 1ère Série, Vol. III.

[3] "Lettres de Jules de Goncourt." See those of January 10, January 17, and April 10, 1869.

[4] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. III, p. 245 *et seq.*

BUVE
RESTAURANTS

Photo by C. Martinet

Boulevard Zola, Aix-in-Provence

Photo by C. Martinet

On the Banks of the Arc, near Aix

that of the Rougon-Macquarts, which finally expanded into a series of twenty volumes.

At a later date, on August 27, 1870, while lunching with Edmond de Goncourt,[1] — Jules had died in the previous June — Zola reverted to this subject and expressed his conviction that, after all which had been accomplished by others, such as by Flaubert in "Madame Bovary," after all the analysis of petty shades of feeling, all the minute jewelry work, so to say, which had been done in literature, there was no longer any call for the younger men to imagine and build up any one or two characters; they could only appeal to the public by the power and the breadth of their creations,— briefly, they must work on a large scale. And Zola allowed it to be inferred that it was this view which had prompted his scheme of a family history.

But he had not been influenced solely by that consideration. The original germ of his idea lay far back, in that projected poetic trilogy, "Genèse," which was to have recounted the advent, development, and destiny of mankind. That vague scheme, suggested by the pages of Lucretius, had been resuscitated, transformed, modernised, so to say, by the repeated perusal of Balzac's "Comédie Humaine"; and there is little doubt that, from the practical standpoint of personal advantage, Zola was also influenced by the success of many connected series of books. It is a question whether Balzac's novels were widely read at that moment. Cheap, badly printed on the vilest paper, they were to be seen in almost every bookseller's shop, but their covers, soiled and fading, often spoke of long continuance in the dealers' custody; whereas there could be no doubt of the ready sale, the immense vogue, of Erckmann-Chatrian's numerous productions. Those so-called "Romans Nationaux" hung well together, thanks to a variety of connecting links; and in their prodigious circulation Zola constantly had before his eyes an example of the great success which might attend a series of novels leading skilfully one from the other.

---

[1] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. IV, p. 15.

But he did not propose to write about the past, even the near past, such as the First Republic and the First Empire, which had supplied Erckmann-Chatrian with their themes; his aim was to describe contemporary manners, those of the then-existing Second Empire. That *régime* had begun in blood, and had passed through some remarkable phases, which would provide him with suitable backgrounds for several stories. And it followed — purely and simply as a matter of course — that the series he contemplated must be largely a record of social and natural degeneration. The degeneracy of the times was a stock subject, a commonplace of contemporary literature. The playwrights — Ponsard, Augier, Feuillet, Barrière, Sardou, Dumas *fils*, and others, had harped upon it for years. It had figured in numerous novels; it had formed the subject of many volumes of so-called "serious" literature; it had appeared in the pages of Tocqueville, it had found an echo amid even the hopefulness of Prévost-Paradol's "France Nouvelle"; it was a theme repeatedly selected by those newspapers which did not pander to the supporters of the *demi-monde*. No doubt, there has never been a time, since men began to write, when some of them have not pictured the world and the human species as degenerate. The cry, *O! tempora, O! mores,* has re-echoed through all the centuries indiscriminately. But under a *régime* so base and corrupt as the Second French

Empire it was justifiable. There could then be no doubt that degeneracy was indeed attacking the nation.

What Zola himself thought on the subject was indicated by him with vigorous indignation in a newspaper article apropos of the licentious operettas of the time. Protesting against all the clappers who went into ecstasies when a so-called actress emphasised "some obscene expression by her contortions," he exclaimed: "*Ah, misère!* on the day when the sublime idea occurs to some woman to play the part of a ———, *au naturel,* on the stage, Paris will fall ill with enthusiasm. But what else can you expect? We have grown up amid shame; we are the bastard progeny of an accursed age. As yet we have only reached jerking of the hips, exhibition of the bosom; but the slope is fatal, and we shall roll down it to the very gutter unless we promptly draw ourselves erect and become free men."[1]

But another point has to be considered. At the very outset of Zola's scheme the predisposition towards certain branches of science which he had shown in his youth revived. The question of hereditary influence had already attracted his attention while he was writing "Madeleine Férat," and it assumed larger proportions and greater complexity when he began to think of his projected family history. The members of the family in question (like all others) would be affected not merely by their actual environment but also by psychological conditions coming from their progenitors. Zola felt that he must study the question carefully, and for some months his spare time was spent at the Bibliothèque Imperiale (now Nationale) where he read every book he could discover treating of hereditary influence.

---

[1] "La Tribune," October, 1869.

As he himself subsequently stated, among the works which most impressed him, there was particularly one by a now almost forgotten scientist, Dr. Prosper Lucas,[1] the brother of Charles Lucas, the eminent pioneer in criminology.

At the end of 1868 Zola drew up a scheme of his proposed "family history," even then preparing the original genealogical tree of the Rougon-Macquarts such as he conceived it.[2] He set down also the terms on which he would write the series, which at this date he proposed to limit to twelve volumes. And he carried everything to his publisher, M. Lacroix, who, while regarding the offer favourably, would not bind himself at the outset for more than the first four volumes. An agreement in that sense was signed in the spring of 1869; it being stipulated that Zola was to write two volumes each year and to receive five hundred francs a month from Lacroix, not in actual payment for his work but as an advance. The stories were to be sold in the first instance to newspapers for serial issue, and with the proceeds of those sales the publisher was to be refunded his advances, wholly or in part. On the subsequent publication in book form (each volume being priced at three francs[3]) the author was to receive a royalty of forty centimes (or about thirteen per cent) on every copy sold. But if the publisher's advances had not been fully repaid with the newspaper money he was to reimburse himself out of the book royalties as they accrued.

---

[1] "Traité philosophique et physiologique de l'Hérédité Naturelle dans les états de santé et de maladie du Système Nerveux," Paris, 1847–1850, 2 vols. 8vo.

[2] This tree was subsequently inserted at the beginning of "Une Page d'Amour," 1878 *et seq.* The leaves bear the names of twenty-six characters. But the series expanded, and with its last volume, "Le Docteur Pascal," 1893, a new genealogical tree was issued giving six more names.

[3] That was then the usual price of a French novel. The rise to 3 francs 50 centimes took place after the War of 1870.

So far, the arrangement, though somewhat unusual, would not seem to have been unduly intricate, but it was rendered so by the further stipulation that every month, on receiving his advance of five hundred francs, Zola should hand Lacroix a promissory note for that amount, at three months' date, those notes being renewable until each volume was issued, when a proper account was to be drawn up. But with this system confusion set in, particularly as after a long delay in the serial issue of the first volume the War of 1870 supervened, in consequence of which M. Lacroix found himself in serious financial difficulties.

To Zola, at the outset, everything seemed clear sailing. He had ensured himself an annual income of six thousand francs[1] for at least two years, and he had only to set to work. Thus, in May, 1869, he started on his first volume, "La Fortune des Rougon," in which he pictured the origin of the family whose history he proposed to recount, and its first ignoble rise to position with the help of Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état.* The scene of the narrative was laid at Aix, which had so long been Zola's home and which, for his literary purposes, he now called Plassans.[2]

His book was written in a Republican spirit with considerable boldness for those Imperial times. And in this connection, by way both of refuting a suggestion made by Edmond de Goncourt, that Zola, in his penury, would willingly have sold himself to the Empire, had it chosen to buy him, and of showing the young author's participation in the journalism of the period, it is as well that one should momentarily retrace one's steps.

---

[1] £240, about $1,200.

[2] See *ante*, p. 30.

Already in 1867, through M. Albert Lacroix, his publisher, Zola had become acquainted with M. Paul Meurice, an able novelist and playwright, best known, however, by his connection with Victor Hugo. The great man had a horror of proof-correcting, and even in his lifetime much of his writing was passed for the press and, one may add, revised by M. Meurice, to whom, since then, has fallen the task of editing both the poet's correspondence and the *éditions définitives* of his books. In the last years of the third Napoleon's reign Hugo lived at Brussels, M. Meurice acting in many matters as his Parisian representative.[1] Madame Meurice's drawing-room was thrown open to all the *Hugolâtres* of the time; and Zola often attended her receptions, accompanied on some occasions by Duranty, on others by Manet. He then met several of the so-called Parnassian poets,[2] who, though their methods were often very different from those of the master, professed great admiration for him. Such were Sully Prudhomme and François Coppée, both of whom Zola first met in Madame Meurice's drawing-room. With M. Coppée, his relations became and remained intimate until the great Dreyfus case, when the so-called "poet of the humble," suffering from a serious chronic disorder, and fearful of losing the services of an expert medical attendant devoted to the priestly cause, resolved to save both soul and body by joining the great crusade against the Jews.

---

[1] Notably with regard to the publication of that extraordinary romance, "L'Homme qui Rit," for which Lacroix paid much more than its value.

[2] The Parnassians, who were brought together by Xavier de Ricard, dated from about 1860. The first series of "Le Parnasse contemporain" was issued by Lemerre in 1866.

Towards the close of 1868 politics passed before literature in Madame Meurice's *salon*, for the tide of opposition to the Empire was then rising rapidly. In May, that year, Henri Rochefort, thanks to a new press law and the help of Villemessant, had started his famous periodical, "La Lanterne"; and in all directions the liberal newspapers had become more and more outspoken, in spite of the many sentences to fine and imprisonment which were heaped on their managers, writers, and printers. The grant of the right of public meeting added to the general unrest, and when 1869 arrived the excitement of the Parisians became the greater as general elections were appointed to take place in May. "La Lanterne" having been crushed — Rochefort seeking an asylum in Belgium where Hugo gave him hospitality — many suggestions of starting another opposition journal were made in Madame Meurice's *salon*. A certain Barbieux, a victim of the *Coup d'État*, carried the idea to Hugo at Brussels, and no satisfactory title having been as yet suggested, the poet undertook to provide one. The next morning, says Rochefort in his autobiography,[1] he proposed "Le Rappel" — a speaking title for those times, signifying a call to arms, the mustering of all who wished to shake off the rule of Napoleon III.

From the first gossip at Madame Meurice's it had been arranged that Zola should belong to the staff of the proposed journal, the principal contributors to which were Charles and François Hugo, the great man's sons; Louis Blanc the historian; Auguste Vacquerie, perhaps the ablest and most fervent of all the *Hugolâtres;*[1] Paul Meurice, of whom one has already spoken; Rochefort, who reprinted portions of his "Lanternes" in "Le Rappel"; Édouard Lockroy, who subsequently married Charles Hugo's widow, and since those days has been a member of more than one Republican Chamber and Ministry; Laferrière, who under the Republic became President of the Council of State, and later Governor-general of Algeria; and finally Zola.

---

[1] "The Adventures of my Life," by Henri Rochefort, English edition, London, 1896, Vol. I, p. 206.

It has already been shown that the latter was by no means a frantic partisan of Victor Hugo; but he was drawn towards the great man's band by circumstances, by an admiration for the poet, which if tempered by his critical sense was within its limits perfectly sincere, and also by a genuine sympathy with the object which the projected newspaper was to further. In one of his earliest contributions to the press, one dealing with Napoleon III's "Life of Cæsar," he had shown that he in no wise admired the Man of Destiny. Other early writings, even passages of "Les Contes à Ninon," breathed a spirit incompatible with Bonapartist imperialism. Further, life in the Quartier Latin had helped to republicanise Zola, and when he took to journalism for a livelihood, it was to the popular opposition press that he naturally turned. Even if "L'Événement" and "Le Figaro" were originally non-political, their tendencies at any rate were against the Empire. Again, "Le Salut Public," of Lyons, was not a government journal, nor was "Le Gaulois," to which Zola contributed several articles on social subjects, literature, and literary men soon after its establishment by Edmond Tarbé. Then, too, "La Tribune," a weekly journal for which he wrote regularly, was certainly most democratic, if rather eccentric in some of its views.[1]

---

[1] His brother, Charles Vacquerie, after marrying the poet's daughter, Léopoldine Hugo, had been drowned with her off Villequier, in 1843.

Nevertheless, a few years after the invasion and revolution, Edmond de Goncourt, lunching one day with Princess Mathilde Bonaparte, did not hesitate to declare that the Empire might have secured Zola's services had it chosen. "He was penniless, he had a mother and a wife to keep. At the outset he had no public opinions. You could have had him on your side like many others, had you chosen. He could only find democratic newspapers to take his copy. Living among all those folk, he became a democrat. It was quite natural." And Goncourt added that the Princess Mathilde had disarmed many hatreds and angers by her friendship, graciousness, and attentions, winning over such men as himself, his brother, and Flaubert to the Empire which, otherwise, they also would have attacked.[2]

Those allegations, so far as they concern Zola, cannot be left unanswered. The Goncourts' "Journal" shows that the brothers, with all their gifts, were not men of the highest principles; and it is evident that they often judged others by their own standard. As a matter of fact there is no shred of evidence that Zola would ever have sold himself to the Empire. At the time of that *régime*, as subsequently, his chief interest lay in literature and art, politics came afterwards; but so far as he concerned himself in them his opinions were essentially democratic. In all respects Edmond de Goncourt's assertions were erroneous. If Zola had cared to sell his pen for political purposes he might have done so with the greatest ease. In 1868–1869, when he first began to give real attention to politics, the authorities were only too anxious to secure clever men who might reply to Rochefort and all the other opposition writers. Large sums were spent in bribing journalists. Villemessant was paid ten thousand pounds to shake off Rochefort and support the authorities; Émile de Girardin was bought with the promise of a senatorship; Clément Duvernois was secured by being placed at the head of a new journal, "Le Peuple Français," on which the Privy-purse, in little more than one year, expended over fifty-six thousand pounds.[1] More money was spent on other journals, new ones like "L'Étendard," for which Auguste Vitu (one of the original characters of Murger's "Vie de Bohème") was engaged; "Le Public," whose editor, Ernest Dréolle, was financed; and "L'Époque," whose nominal proprietor was Dusautoy, the Emperor's tailor. For these and other newspapers contributors were required, and a good many clever but needy men of lax principles presented themselves. The less brazen among them found their excuse in the pretended transformation of the *régime*; they would never have served the "personal Empire" — of course not! — but the "liberal Empire" commanded their sympathies.

---

[1] This was perhaps due to the circumstance that Glais-Bizoin, the *enfant terrible* of the Republican opposition in the Corps Législatif, played the chief part in the directorship of the paper, the latter's better features being imparted to it by his co-editor, the scholarly Eugène Pelletan. It was run chiefly in view of the 1869 elections and Zola subsequently remarked that excepting himself and the office boy every member of its staff was a parliamentary candidate.

[2] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. V, p. 150 (November 13, 1874).

---

[1] "Papiers et Correspondance de la Famille Impériale," Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1870.

It follows that Edmond de Goncourt's estimate of Zola's democratic tendencies was arrant nonsense. Paris had been the young writer's home for several years now; he knew what to think of the Empire, and was against, not with, it. However, he placed literature before politics, particularly as all he saw of the political *cuisine* of the times inclined him to regard many professional politicians with contempt. And his Republicanism was not so intense as to restrict him exclusively to Republican society. He admired the Goncourts and Flaubert — to whom the former introduced him in 1869 — as literary masters, and associated with them freely. Again, he saw no reason why he should not contribute stories to "L'Artiste" and "L'Illustration," even if their editors did not think politically as he did. With respect to "Le Rappel," though his contributions were at times political they more frequently dealt with literary subjects; and the independence of his character was illustrated by the boldness with which he praised Balzac in a journal patronised and in some degree financed by Victor Hugo, who held that Balzac was fated to early and absolute oblivion, because he could not even write French. The result of Zola's championship of Balzac in "Le Rappel" was the severance of his connection with that journal. This, however, did not take place till the last months of the Empire, when much of the paper's purpose was already accomplished.

In the summer of 1869, after signing his contract with Lacroix for the first Rougon-Macquart volumes, Zola felt that he might at last venture to marry, and in July Mademoiselle Mesley, to whom reference has been made already,[1] became his wife. As he afterwards explained, apart from the question of love, he held "the married state to be an indispensable condition for the accomplishment of all good and substantial work. The theory which pictured woman as a destructive creature, one who killed an artist, pounded his heart, and fed upon his brain — was a romantic idea which facts controverted. For his own part, he needed an affection that would guarantee him tranquillity, a loving home, where he might shut himself up, so as to devote his life to the great series of books which he dreamt of. Everything, said he, depended upon a man's choice, and he believed he had found what he needed, — an orphan, the daughter of tradespeople, without a penny, but handsome and intelligent."[1]

---

[1] See *ante*, p. 100.

At this time, after removing from the corner of the Avenue de Clichy and the Rue Moncey to 23, Rue Truffaut, Zola had secured a little house or "pavilion" in the Rue de La Condamine, — likewise at Batignolles, — a house reached by crossing the courtyards of a larger building divided into flats and facing the street. By opening an iron gate one gained admittance to a small garden with a tiny lawn, over which a large plum-tree cast its shade, while directly in front of the pavilion was an arbour of Virginia creeper. Three rooms on the ground floor, and three on the first, "all like little drawers with partitions as flimsy as paper," such was the accommodation which the house offered; and the dining-room was so small that when a little later Zola purchased a piano, the necessary space for it could only be obtained by transforming a kind of china cupboard into an alcove.[2] The inmates of this band-box were four in numer: Zola, his young wife, his aged mother, now in very indifferent health, and his dog, a cross between a sheep-dog and a Newfoundland, — in a word the faithful Mathieu, of whose last years and death the novelist afterwards wrote so pathetically in "La Joie de Vivre." A servant-woman, who slept out, attended to the harder and dirtier housework; Madame Zola the younger took charge of most of the cooking; and it was amid these conditions, in this little pavilion behind No. 14, Rue de La Condamine, that the young author, who had but lately completed his twenty-ninth year, resolutely set to work upon one of the greatest literary efforts ever made, one which not only embraced a most painstaking study of a period and its people, but imported into fiction, for the first time in its history, virtually every application of the scientific theory of atavism.

---

[1] "L'Œuvre," p. 208.

[2] "L'Œuvre," p. 251. Alexis, p. 91.

Thus Zola gave effect to his old desire to try to reconcile science and poetry — which he had only recently enunciated once more in an article in "La Tribune." And in the prosecution of this self-chosen task over a long term of years, amid many difficulties, the greatest ridicule, the most impudent misrepresentation, the most savage abuse that every white-livered critic could think of, he did not once swerve from the view he expressed in "Le Gaulois" about the time when he was signing his contract with Lacroix: "If I kept a school of morals I would hasten to place 'Madame Bovary' or 'Germinie Lacerteux' in my pupils' hands, convinced as I am that only truth can instruct and fortify generous souls."[1]

That view remained Zola's till his last hour.

Early in the summer of 1869 he handed the opening chapters of his first volume, "La Fortune des Rougon," to the acting-editor of "Le Siècle," with which journal he had negotiated its serial issue. "Le Siècle" then held in Paris a position similar to that of "The Morning Advertiser" in London. That is to say, it was largely the organ of the licensed victuallers, without, however, belonging to them. Even as in England, there is sometimes said to be a Beer and Bible alliance between the brewers and the clergy, so "Le Siècle" represented a kind of Wine and Democracy compact. It was found in every Parisian wine shop, and during the earlier years of the Empire it had been the only journal of democratic tendencies which the authorities tolerated. Léonor Havin, who became an Opposition deputy in the Corps Législatif, conducted the paper with great ability for several years, but he was dead when Zola negotiated the publication of his novel, and "Le Siècle" had fallen into the hands of that journalistic abomination, an "editorial board." Zola had a friend at court in the person of M. Castagnary, who many years previously had done for Courbet what Zola, comparatively recently, had done for Manet. But Castagnary, while exercising considerable influence, helping to impart a more resolute Republican tone to the paper, was not all powerful in the board room; and not only had Zola already made a good many enemies in his own profession, but a recollection of the opposition which his earlier novels had encountered from the readers of other newspapers, so influenced "Le Siècle's" editorial committee that it again and again postponed the publication of "La Fortune des Rougon."

---

[1] "Le Gaulois," March 26, 1869.

Thus Zola found himself in an unpleasant position at the very moment when he hoped to live in a little quietude and comfort. M. Lacroix, for some months, made the stipulated advances without raising any difficulty, but when 1870 arrived the position became more and more uncertain. Zola was reduced to such a state of anxiety that for weeks at a time he could hardly write, and it was only the encouragement he received from his brave young wife that gave him enough energy to persevere.

Thanks to newspaper work, he earned just sufficient money to live on meagrely from day to day and keep the home together; and at last, the publication of "La Fortune des Rougon" being still deferred, he turned from that work, which he had not quite completed, in order to begin another. This was "La Curée," into which some of his critics have read a great many things which he never put in it. Politically and financially, it was simply the story of the Haussmanisation of Paris, while morally its central intrigue was neither more nor less than an adaptation of the ancient legend of Phædra to the corrupt times of the Empire. Of this second book Zola had just written the first chapter, at the end of May, 1870, when "Le Siècle" suddenly decided to publish his earlier work. So once again the young author reverted to "La Fortune des Rougon," correcting the proofs of the commencement and penning the conclusion.

Things looked brighter now, but after that year of keen anxiety Madame Zola was in a very ailing state and needed change and rest. Zola himself felt a longing to get away from Paris for a time, and so, after making various pecuniary arrangements with M. Lacroix and "Le Siècle," he started with his wife and mother for Provence. Then, all at once, came the thunderclap: Napoleon III declared war against Prussia, France was invaded; her armies were surprised at Wissemburg, overthrown at Woerth, thrust back from Borny and Gravelotte under Metz, routed at Beaumont, surrounded and captured at Sedan. The Empire fell, and a fortnight later the Germans invested Paris. Zola, now in his thirty-first year, was not called upon to undertake any military duties like others of that age, for, being the only son of a widow, the law exempted him from service. It is true, no doubt, that other widows' sons at that time occasionally joined the colours as volunteers, in spite of the legal exemption. And on that account, at a subsequent period, directly after the publication of "La Débâcle," Zola's enemies made much of the fact that he had not done likewise.

But proper allowance should be made for his circumstances at the time. The investment of Paris had cut him off from his usual sources of income; he found himself virtually adrift, at Marseilles, with his sick wife and his old mother, who had become more or less infirm. They had little or no money, there was no relative with whom they might seek a refuge, and if Zola, in a fine spirit of patriotism, had gone to join the army, the two women would have become dependent on the charity of the public. At first Zola was at a loss what to do. But meeting M. Arnaud, who had published his "Mystères de Marseilles" in the "Messager de Provence," he prevailed on him to run a popular halfpenny war journal, which was called "La Marseillaise." Zola's friend, Marius Roux, who was then also in the city, joined him in the venture, and between them they wrote the whole paper, which at the outset seemed likely to prove successful, its sales amounting to ten and fifteen thousand copies; but typographical and other difficulties arose, and at last, instead of money being earned, it was lost.

In December (1870) Zola's position at Marseilles being once more little short of desperate, he went to Bordeaux to seek some work there, that city having lately become the capital of France by the removal of the National Defence Delegation from Tours. At Bordeaux he found Glais-Bizoin, under whom he had formerly contributed to "La Tribune," and Glais-Bizoin, who was now a member of the Government, a colleague of Gambetta, Crémieux, and Fourichon, made him his secretary. Short, lean, a septuagenarian, with a glistening cranium and a nose like a hawk's beak, this Breton proconsul was one of the amusing personalities of the time. An ardent democrat, he had sat in the legislative chambers of the July Monarchy, the Second Republic, and the Second Empire, making himself quite a parliamentary reputation, not by his own speeches, but by the caustic, galling, and irrelevant manner in which he interrupted the speeches of others. Under his ægis Zola became acquainted with the whole *entourage* of the National Defence Delegation, from the astute and prim Clément Laurier, who had negotiated the notorious Morgan Loan, to the dishevelled, bohemian, and nicotian Georges Cavalié, otherwise Pipe-en-Bois, who, tapping the British ambassador, Lord Lyons, on the shoulder one morning, while his excellency was somewhat impatiently waiting for Gambetta, had suggested familiarly: "I say, old man, don't bother about the governor; let's go and have a good glass of beer!"[1]

---

[1] The "Blowitz Memoirs" (London, 1903) give an erroneous version of this story, transferring the scene to the Quai d'Orsay, in Paris, and making Cavalié secretary to Paschal Grousset, "Delegate for Foreign Affairs" of the

In these circumstances Zola summoned his wife and mother to Bordeaux, and set himself to write letters and prepare reports for Glais-Bizoin, pending another appointment; for the old democrat, on introducing him to Clément Laurier, who disposed of most of the civil patronage, had said: "I want a prefecture for this young man, — the first one that may fall vacant." In Glais-Bizoin's estimation, Zola's claim to such a post was self-evident; for he had belonged to the staff of "La Tribune," and since the Revolution of September 4 all the writers on that journal had become members of the Government, ambassadors, or prefects. In Zola's case the first vacancies which occurred were the prefectures of Bayonne and Auch, but both were secured by more eager and active candidates, and all that Laurier could ultimately offer was a sub-prefecture, that of Castel-Sarrasin, a pleasant little town of seven thousand inhabitants, on the Garonne, not far from Montauban.

This incident in Zola's career has been turned by some of his detractors into an exciting romance which it is unnecessary to recapitulate. The main facts have been given by Alexis, to whose account a few particulars may be added, The war at that time was drawing to an end. Gambetta was anxious to prevent any partisans of the fallen Empire from being returned at the elections for an Assembly, which were becoming more and more inevitable and imminent. There was a sub-prefect at Castel-Sarrasin named Camille Delthil.

Commune of 1871. As Lord Lyons was not then in Paris, that version is obviously wrong. The incident, which the ambassador himself narrated more than once in after years, really occurred at Tours late in 1870, Cavalié's words being: "Dites donc, mon vieux, il ne faut pas se faire de bile, au sujet du patron. Allons plutôt prendre un bon bock!" Cavalié was a notorious bohemian, worthy of Murger; he had been one of the leaders of the cabal against the Goncourts' play, "Henriette Maréchal."

He was a young poet, the author of a volume of "Poëmes Parisiens," to which he afterwards added "Les Rustiques" and "Les Lambrusques." He discharged his duties with the literary grace of a true Parnassian, and a mildness which arose from the circumstance that he was himself a native of Castel-Sarrasin. Gambetta deemed him altogether too mild. According to the Dictator, to ensure the return of a Republican in that constituency a strong-fisted sub-prefect was needed, a man, too, who could pen vigorous and stirring proclamations. Now it occurred to Clément Laurier that Zola had a vigorous style and a stern mien, so why should not the novelist be set in the place of the poet, the latter being gently transferred to some other office? But Delthil would not consent to this arrangement. Having been born at Castel-Sarrasin, he gloried in ruling it.

According to the legend, he now threw off all his mildness, barricaded himself in his sub-prefecture, and defied both the Government and Zola, in such wise that the latter, although duly "gazetted," was unable to take possession of his post when he repaired to Castel-Sarrasin. But he never went there. The truth is that he had barely accepted the appointment when Paris capitulated, and Jules Simon arrived at Bordeaux to put an end to some of Gambetta's high-handed proceedings. Forthwith, in presence of the general "muddle" which arose, and with the thought, also, that now communications with Paris were restored, he might revert to journalism, and ultimately to literature, Zola called on Laurier and withdrew his acceptance of the appointment.

It may be idle and unprofitable to speculate concerning "the might-have-been," yet a few remarks may well be offered respecting this curious episode in Zola's career. His original acceptance of Laurier's offer was explained by him to Alexis. Those were wild times, and every mind was more or less unhinged. "For my part," said Zola, "I imagined that it was the end of the world, and that there would be no more literature. I had brought the manuscript of the first chapter of 'La Curée' with me from Paris, and I occasionally looked at it as I might have looked at some very old papers which had become mere souvenirs. Paris seemed to me very far away, lost in the clouds; and, as I had my wife and mother with me and no certain prospect of money, I ended by thinking it quite natural and advisable that I should plunge into politics, for which I had felt so much contempt previously, — a contempt which speedily returned."[1]

There was some little exaggeration in those last words as the sequel will show, though as Zola was a man of absolute convictions, one who detested compromises, it was only natural that he should look unfavourably on many politicians and their methods. But, whatever his views, it happened that politics repeatedly played an important part in his life, even at the time when he appeared most devoted to purely literary pursuits. It does not seem very difficult to divine how his career would have shaped itself had he become a functionary. As he had too independent a character to execute any orders unless he regarded them as right, he would soon have found himself at loggerheads with his superiors, dismissed or compelled to resign; and unlike the majority of the discarded functionaries of the period he could hardly have sought compensation in a parliamentary seat, for he was no orator. Thus, like some others, he might have become a mere hanger-on of the Republican party, one of those who only secured a real livelihood subsequent to Thiers and MacMahon, when Gambetta's influence again became paramount in France.

---

[1] Alexis, *l. c.*, p. 173.

His refusal, at the first opportunity, of the sub-prefectoral appointment which he had only accepted as a *pis-aller*, was therefore wise. He could not get rid of politics, whatever may have been his desires, but he at least confined himself to the duties of a political journalist. He became a correspondent of "Le Sémaphore," the chief daily paper of Marseilles, his connection with which lasted seven years. Further he placed himself in communication with "La Cloche" of Paris, for which he had written a few articles previous to the Siege, and which, curiously enough, was directed by Louis Ulbach, — the novelist and critic who had denounced "Thérèse Raquin" as "putrid literature." That quarrel, apparently, had been patched up, and Zola and Ulbach, while remaining of antagonistic literary schools, had found some basis of agreement in politics. At all events the former now became the descriptive parliamentary correspondent of "La Cloche," recording the doings of the National Assembly, first at Bordeaux, later at Versailles, his connection with this journal lasting till the summer of 1872, when he carried his pen to "Le Corsaire," for which he wrote several fiery political articles, one of which, called "The Morrow of the Crisis"[1] almost led to the paper's suppression.

---

[1] This was a crisis provoked by Thiers' Presidential Message of November 13, 1872, by which he asked for the definite constitution of a Republic, a proposal which led to a great outcry on the part of those who wished to place the Count de Chambord or the Count de Paris on the throne.

Leaving Bordeaux for Paris about the time when the Assembly removed to Versailles, Zola who had seen nothing of the German siege, at least witnessed various incidents of the Commune.[1] The little house in the Rue de La Condamine was now again his home, and at times he went about the city, and at others betook himself to Versailles, zealously attending to his duties for "La Cloche." At that moment there could be no thought of book-writing; but after the fall of the Commune at the end of May, 1871, he again turned to "La Curée," and prevailed upon Ulbach to print that story as a serial. Considerable confusion still prevailed in Paris, and he was put to many shifts for information which he needed — shifts which some of his critics afterwards imputed to him as crimes, though the wonder is that he should have been able to write such a book at all, in the hurly-burly through which France was passing.

"La Curée" began to appear in "La Cloche" towards the end of September (1871), and about the same time Lacroix at last published the initial volume of the series, "La Fortune des Rougon," the final chapter of which had remained lying in the offices of "Le Siècle" throughout the war, much to the alarm of Zola, who had regarded it as lost. The book met with little sale, little recognition, but this is not surprising. France had not yet recovered from the great convulsions of the war and the Commune, and small was the attention vouchsafed to literature. Moreover, as Paris slowly settled down to a degree of quietude, it desired amusement more than anything else — the sprightliest music, the gayest songs, the very lightest literature obtainable. It was the usual reaction, the same which had come with all the frivolity of the Directory after the Terror's bath of blood. Produced, then, under the most unfavourable conditions, "La Fortune des Rougon" did not even secure the honour of a real second edition, for the copies which may be found bearing the mention "second edition" on their covers and title-pages, were merely a residue of the first one, only a portion of which was bound when the book originally appeared.[1]

---

[1] See "Souvenirs; XIV," in the "Nouveaux Contes à Ninon."

This was bad, and it seemed really as if Zola would never reach the end of his troubles, for the Public Prosecution service took note of "La Curée" as it appeared in "La Cloche," and adjudged a certain account of a supper at the Café Riche to be immoral. It was early in November when Zola received an intimation from the Public Prosecutor requesting him to call at his office. He did so and was received by an official who "advised" him to cease publishing his story in a newspaper. Zola protested the purity of his intentions, explained that his one desire was to show the corruption of society under the fallen Empire, but he finally accepted the official "advice." On November 8, then, he wrote to Ulbach, asking him to suspend publication, his letter being printed in "La Cloche" with the following editorial comment: "We desire that the public should fully know that whatever may be our personal opinion of Zola's analytical method, and whatever danger he may incur from the audacity of his studies, his imprudence is that of a most upright character, sincerely attached to truth in art."

---

[1] "La Fortune des Rougon," Librairie Internationale. 1st and 2d editions: 1871, 389 pages, 18mo, 3 francs; 3d edition, Charpentier, 1872, 385 pages, 18mo, 3 francs 50 centimes. Thirty-eighth thousand on sale in 1903.

As it happened, the serial issue, if suspended in "La Cloche," was completed in a periodical called "La République des Lettres" which Catulle Mendès, the poet and son-in-law of Théophile Gautier, was then editing. Mendès placed himself at Zola's disposal directly he heard of the affair, and curiously enough he rendered him a similar service some years later with respect to "L'Assommoir." The first edition of "La Curée" was produced by Lacroix early in 1872,[1] and soon afterwards the publisher, whose interests had been greatly affected by the war, was forced to suspend business. Thus once more the demon of ill-luck fell upon Zola's home. The "Lettres parisiennes" which he was then writing for "La Cloche," his correspondence for "Le Sémaphore," did not supply all his needs; terrible times came back, numerous bills given to Lacroix were protested, executions followed, and on one desperate occasion, there being nothing pawnable, for everything had been seized except the bedding, which according to the law could not be attached, the very wool of the mattresses on which Zola and his wife slept was sold by the latter to a dealer in order to procure the necessary money for bread.

In these distressful circumstances a great service was rendered to Zola by a man for whose literary style he had no great admiration, though curiously enough it was in more than one respect akin to his own. This was Théophile Gautier to whose connection with Catulle Mendès reference has just been made. Gautier had a fair knowledge of the young man's literary work, and he heard, probably from Mendès, of his terrible position. Now Gautier's publisher was M. Georges Charpentier, who had lately taken over his father's business, and one evening when they and Francisque Sarcey were together at the Comédie Française, their conversation, during one of the *entr'actes*, fell on the young writers of the time. "There is one among them," said Gautier,[1] "who is very unlucky, and who is different from most of the others. You should admit him among your authors, my dear Charpentier. If I am not vastly mistaken he possesses a touch of genius. His name is Émile Zola. Have you ever heard of him?"

---

[1] "La Curée," Librairie Internationale; 1st edition: covers dated 1872, title-pages, 1871, 360 pages, 18mo, 3 francs; 2d edition, Charpentier, 1872, 354 pages, 18mo, 3 francs 50 centimes; 5th edition, 350 pages, 1876; fiftieth thousand on sale in 1903.

Yes, both Charpentier and Sarcey had often heard of Zola, and had remarked his repeated efforts to get to the front. Nevertheless they were somewhat surprised by the praise which had fallen from Gautier's lips. He, subsequent to this conversation, caused Zola to be informed of the recommendation he had given him, and the young novelist soon called on M. Charpentier, whose establishment was then on the Quai du Louvre. For just one moment there had been a little hesitation on Zola's part. His only suit of clothes was quite disreputable, and both he and his devoted young wife felt that he ought, at least, to appear decently clad before this publisher on whom his fate depended. There was very little money in the house, but Madame Zola took it and hurried to the "slop" market of the Temple, where she purchased a second-hand suit of black, the nearest approach to a fit that she could find. In those slop garments — which remind one of Daudet's black trousers, similarly acquired, which suddenly became a military red, having been very imperfectly dyed — Zola presented himself before Charpentier, and was pleased to find that he had to deal, not with the stern founder of the business, whom some authors regarded as a kind of terror, but with the son, a pleasant, cordial man of about his own age.

---

[1] M. Adolphe Brisson in "Le Temps," October 3, 1902.

The position was explained: Lacroix was ruined, and Zola wished to transfer his contract with certain modifications. M. Charpentier asked for twenty-four hours to consider the matter, and on the morrow an agreement was arrived at. During a period of five years Zola was to supply two novels every twelvemonth, and Charpentier was to hand him five hundred francs every month; that is to say, in addition to the two volumes published by Lacroix there would be ten others, representing in the aggregate a sum of thirty thousand francs. Whereas, however, in the contract with Lacroix, the money received by Zola was regarded as an advance, in that with M. Charpentier it was to be actual payment, in return for which the full copyright in each of the ten novels which Zola engaged to write would belong to M. Charpentier for ten years. During that period he would be at liberty to produce them in whatever manner he pleased, both serially and in book form, as well as to sell the rights of translation to foreign publishers, without paying Zola a single franc beyond the stipulated monthly allowance.[1] As Zola desired that the entire series should be in the hands of one publisher, a desire which Charpentier shared, there was also an understanding respecting "La Fortune des Rougon" and "La Curée," the right to republish which was secured from Lacroix by a payment of eight hundred francs.

The agreement with Charpentier certainly extricated Zola from an extremely difficult position, and it is unlikely that he would have secured better terms, or even as good, elsewhere. But what did they amount to? To the prospect of an income of two hundred and forty pounds[1] a year for five years, in exchange for ten novels. As the sequel showed, such an income would hardly have sufficed for Zola's wants, particularly as there were many claims on him with respect to the bills he had given Lacroix. No less than thirty thousand francs' worth of paper bearing his signature or endorsement was in circulation about this time, says Alexis, and Zola had the greatest difficulty to prove that he had not been the ruined publisher's "man of straw." The nominal amount of his indebtedness was swollen, and the intricacy of the position increased, by the circumstance that many a time when a bill had been renewed it had not been returned to him, though the new bill was placed in circulation. It was only in 1875 that Zola was able to recover his notes and acceptances, and generally liquidate his position, by the payment of various amounts in accordance with an arrangement entered into with M. Lacroix. The latter, be it said, was an honourable but unlucky man, a victim both of circumstances and of misplaced confidence in others.

---

[1] All that the author retained was the dramatic rights.

But, to return to Zola. His contract with M. Charpentier did not free him from the necessity of doing his utmost to increase his income by journalism, to which he devoted no little time. This threw him back with his novels, which, as will be shown, often necessitated considerable preliminary study, and which he refused to "scamp." The publishing arrangement he had made partook undoubtedly of a

---

[1] About $1,200.

"pot-boiling" character; but he was resolved that there should be nothing of the nature of pot-boiling about his literary work. He found at last that he could not write more than one novel a year, and thus, though he drew his money regularly enough, the time came — in or about 1875 — when he owed M. Charpentier two or three volumes. Mustering his courage, he called on his publisher to explain his position. But at the first words he spoke with respect to his overdraughts, M. Charpentier interrupted him.

"My dear friend," said he, "I do not wish to rob you. I do not want to derive more than my usual profits from your work. I have lately had an account of your sales drawn up on the basis of an author's royalty of forty centimes per volume,[1] and according to this account, it is not you who owe me money, it is I who owe you some ten thousand francs. Here is our agreement, I tear it up, and all you have to do is to see my cashier."

As Alexis remarks, after telling this story, what other publisher would have done such a thing? In Zola's case it raised him from modest circumstances to affluence. Had the original contract remained in force he would have earned, inclusive of the earlier payments from Lacroix, no more than forty thousand francs by the first twelve volumes of his "Rougon-Macquart" series. At least he would have earned no more during the first ten years of their circulation. But thanks to M. Charpentier's generous honesty, — the successive increase, too, of Zola's royalty from forty to fifty and sixty centimes per volume, the various sums accruing from special issues, illustrated editions, popular editions, *éditions de luxe,* serial rights and translation rights — all of which, under the agreement, would have belonged to the publisher — he earned by those twelve books fully twenty times the amount of money he had covenanted to take for them.

---

[1] The books sold at 3 francs 50 centimes each; so the above would represent a royalty of about 11 per cent.

That said, it is as well to return to the year 1872, and show how, his long spell of absolute ill-luck ceasing, Zola, while still encountering much hostility, which presently was to grow into a furious storm, gradually advanced along the path of success, assisted by literature's handmaiden, journalism, and cheered by the friendship of some of the foremost men of letters of his time.

VI

THE PATH OF SUCCESS

1872–1877

Flaubert and his intimates: Zola, Goncourt, Tourgeneff, Daudet, and Maupassant — "Thérèse Raquin" as a play — "Le Ventre de Paris" and the sensitive critics — A first charge of plagiarism — The "Dinners of the Hissed Authors" — Zola and good fare — Sunday gatherings at Flaubert's — "La Conquête de Plassans" — "Les Héritiers Rabourdin" — Zola in the Rue St. Georges — His contributions to a Russian review — "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret" — "Nouveaux Contes à Ninon" — "Son Excellence Eugène Rougon" — The truth about "back-stairs gossip" — Flaubert's mimicry of Napoleon III — Zola, Daudet, and "personalities" in fiction — Zola "sees mice and birds" — His stay at St. Aubin-sur-Mer — He plans "L'Assommoir" — Publication of "Son Excellence" — Dramatic criticism for "Le Bien Public" — Zola's income early in 1876 — Serial issue of "L'Assommoir" — The outcry and the cessation of publication — Catulle Mendès to the rescue — "L'Assommoir" as a book — Its large sales — A furious controversy — Articles, pamphlets, poems, parodies, and lectures — The years of "L'Assommoir" a date in French Literature — Other writings of the time — Zola's "band," Alexis, Huysmans, Maupassant, Céard, and Hennique — Flaubert, "L'Assommoir" and "Naturalism" — Zola's hammer, journalism — Self-assertion and pushfulness the weapons of the age.

After the Franco-German War, Gustave Flaubert, who during fifteen years of the imperial *régime* had resided, when in Paris, on the Boulevard du Temple, found a *pied-à-terre* in the Rue Murillo, near the Parc Monceau, thereby becoming one of Zola's neighbours, for the Rue Murillo is only a few minutes' walk from the Rue de La Condamine. Zola frequently called on Flaubert, whom he at first found very downcast, for the fall of the Empire seemed to him the end of the world, and besides, he had not yet recovered from the failure of his book, "L'Éducation sentimentale," published in 1869. It was at Flaubert's that Zola again met Edmond de Goncourt, who was still mourning his brother, and feeling so discouraged that he hardly dared to take pen in hand. With Zola and Goncourt came Flaubert's young disciple, Guy de Maupassant, at that moment little more than one-and-twenty, then Ivan Tourgeneff and Alphonse Daudet, whom Zola had already met in the days of "L'Evénement," these five being for a time the only intimates of the author of "Madame Bovary." They were not a very gay party, it would seem. One Shrove Sunday, says Zola, while the carnival horns were resounding in the streets, he sat till nightfall listening to Goncourt and Flaubert, who for hours did not cease recalling the past and lamenting its disappearance.[1] Goncourt, on his side, receiving Zola about this time (June, 1872), once more found him sickly and neurotic, complaining confusedly of rheumatism, heart and bladder trouble, and mastered by such acute nervous trembling that he had to employ both hands to carry his glass to his lips.[2]

At that date Zola was planning a novel on the Paris markets — "Le Ventre de Paris" — and dramatising his earlier book, "Thérèse Raquin," working, so he told Goncourt, some nine hours and a half every day. When his play was finished he offered it to M. Hostein, the director of a new Parisian theatre, La Renaissance, and after numerous alterations had been effected, its five acts being reduced to four, it was staged and produced on July 11, 1873, when it met with a curious reception. The more frivolous, the "society" section of the audience, could not endure such tragic sombreness, and Francisque Sarcey, who held that the stage only existed for the amusement of the public, declared that "this man Zola" made him feel "quite ill." If, however, there was some hissing at the first performance of "Thérèse Raquin," there was also some applause, and when the curtain fell the question of success or failure seemed still to be hanging in the balance. But the professional critics agreed to slate the play, and moreover the "dog-days" were just beginning, the heat emptying even those theatres which had hitherto drawn large audiences, in such wise that after nine performances La Renaissance closed its doors for the summer vacation, and "Thérèse Raquin," as a play, was heard of no more.

---

[1] Zola's "Documents Littéraires," p. 178.

[2] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. IV, p. 44.

Zola consoled himself with the comparative success of his novel, "Le Ventre de Paris,"[1] which reached a second edition deservedly, for its kaleidoscopic pictures of the Paris markets were the best descriptive work that the author had as yet penned. Nevertheless, the book encountered some severe criticism at the hands of the few reviewers who condescended to notice it. Writers devoid of any Rabelaisian sense denounced it as the apotheosis of gluttony; the transference of a pork-butcher's shop to literature was regarded as outrageous; and a certain "symphony of cheeses" gave one critic such a fit of nausea, that an unsuspecting foreigner reading his remarks might have imagined cheese to be an abomination to the delicately constituted Parisians, whereas, in fact, they then consumed — and still consume to-day — a greater amount and a greater variety of cheese, often with the strangest flavours and odours, than any other community in the world.

---

[1] "Le Ventre de Paris," Paris, Charpentier, 1873, 2 editions, 18mo, 362 pages; 3d edition, 1876, 18mo, 358 pages. From this point all the volumes of the ordinary edition of "Les Rougon-Macquart" were priced at 3 francs 50 centimes. The forty-seventh thousand of "Le Ventre de Paris" (Charpentier edition) was on sale in 1903. There is also an edition illustrated with wood engravings. Paris, Flammarion, n. d. large 8vo.

But, apropos of this same "symphony," a Parnassian poet, — one who was then regarded as a neo-Grecian, neither more nor less, — M. Anatole France, pointed out rightly enough that the imagery in which Zola indulged was inconsistent with his claim already put forward, though not definitely enunciated, to be a realistic writer. "Such vain, empty, and detestable *virtuosité*" had no place, said M. France, in the realist system; and indeed, taking that system as it was defined by Zola under the name of naturalism a little later, M. France was assuredly correct. As a matter of fact the duality of Zola's nature was always appearing. He was for ever straying beyond the limits of the doctrines he propounded, having quaffed too deeply of Hugo's rhetoric in his youth to be able to restrain himself. And it was as well, perhaps, to show that even at this early stage of his great series, his vagaries, his deviations from his self-chosen principles, already attracted attention.

It was also apropos of this same "Ventre de Paris," that the first of many charges of plagiarism was preferred against Zola. In this instance it was M. Nadar, photographer, aeronaut, caricaturist, and author, who declared that "the colour scale" of the sea of vegetables which Zola showed spreading around the Paris markets had been borrowed from something which he, Nadar, had written. But Zola had merely expanded a passage of one of his own early articles; and the suggestion of plagiarism was the more ridiculous as the first thing which strikes anybody, even with only a little artistic perception, when witnessing daybreak at the Paris markets, is the diversity of the picture's hues, the great medley of colour gradually accentuated by the light of the rising sun. M. Nadar probably realised that his contention could not be regarded seriously. At all events the matter dropped, and Zola turned to his next volume, "La Conquête de Plassans," as well as to a new play, a three-act comedy, which he entitled "Les Héritiers Rabourdin."

Meantime, it had occurred to Flaubert to unite his intimates in a monthly dinner, which, said he, might be called "the Dinner of the Hissed Authors." He himself had been hissed for his play, "Le Candidat," Zola had encountered a similar experience with "Thérèse Raquin," Alphonse Daudet with "L'Arlésienne," and Edmond de Goncourt with "Henriette Maréchal." Tourgeneff, also, was admitted to the company on the strength of his assertion that he had been hissed in Russia; but, according to Daudet, when Émile de Girardin, hearing of the project, wished to join the others — pleading, no doubt, the reception given to the notorious "Supplice d'une Femme" — they promptly blackballed him on the ground that he was not a *littérateur*.[1]

Thanks to the wine provided at those monthly dinners, they were livelier, though perhaps not more interesting, than the Sunday meetings in Flaubert's rooms. They took place at various restaurants, the first at the Café Riche, on April 14, 1874.[2] Then, as Flaubert was starting for Le Croisset, near Rouen, the next was adjourned till the winter

---

[1] Alphonse Daudet's "Trente ans de Paris," 1888. There are numerous discrepancies in the accounts which Daudet, Zola, and Goncourt have left of some of these dinners; but the author has endeavoured to give a general idea of them.

[2] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. V, p. 173.

Photo by Nadar

Émile Zola, 1876-1880

months. As Zola tells us, during the years over which these dinners were spread, the choice of a restaurant for the next repast invariably led to great discussion among the five *convives.* Anxious apparently to sample every kind of *cuisine,* they went from the Café Riche to Voisin's in the Rue St. Honoré; from Voisin's to Adolphe and Pelé's near the Grand Opera House, and thence to the Byron on the Place de l'Opéra Comique. They feasted now on *bouillabaisse,* now on *poulet au kari.* Tourgeneff naturally required caviar to whet his appetite; Flaubert always insisted on having Normandy butter, and revelled in Rouen ducklings *à l'étouffade;* while Goncourt evinced a depraved taste for preserved ginger. As for Zola, he, according to Alphonse Daudet, was addicted to shellfish and sea-urchins! His friends occasionally twitted him respecting the partiality he began to evince for good fare, — which cast, they said, a lurid light on his novel, "Le Ventre de Paris" — and he frankly acknowledged his *gourmandise,* pleading, however, that it was his only vice, and that he had gone hungry so many years!

Of course there was no ceremony at those monthly dinners. Flaubert and Zola often took off their coats and sat down at table "in their shirt-sleeves," as the phrase goes, while between the courses Tourgeneff would sprawl on a sofa. And directly the coffee was served the waiters were turned out of the room, and a long discussion on literary subjects began, that is when it had not been started already at the outset of the repast. "I remember," wrote Zola, in his recollections of Flaubert,[1] "a terrible discussion on Chateaubriand, which lasted from seven in the evening till one o'clock in the morning. Flaubert and Daudet defended him, Tourgeneff and I attacked him, while Goncourt remained neutral. At other times we took up the subject of the passions, talked of women and love, and on those occasions the waiters looked at us aghast. Then, as Flaubert detested having to walk home alone, I accompanied him through the dark streets, and did not get to bed till three o'clock in the morning, for we halted at the corner of every open space to philosophise."

---

[1] Zola's "Les Romanciers Naturalistes," p. 181.

Meantime the Sunday gatherings at Flaubert's had become far less gloomy. The author of "Madame Bovary" had gradually accustomed himself to the new order of things, and when he removed from the Rue Murillo to the Faubourg St. Honoré, a number of admirers surrounded him, as well as his half-dozen chosen intimates.[1] On some occasions as many as twenty visitors assembled in his half-furnished white and gold drawing-room, which from three till six o'clock became full of tobacco-smoke, everybody except Zola freely indulging in pipe, cigar, or cigarette. He had ceased smoking under compulsion, in his days of dire necessity, and though no such compulsion existed now, even Flaubert seldom succeeded in forcing a pipe upon him.

In his account of those Sunday gatherings, he allows us to understand that the speech often suggested the style of Rabelais, perhaps even of Villon, that spades were called plumply spades, which will not surprise those who know the Cambronnesque epithet that Flaubert — the stylist —

---

[1] Alexis mentions among the frequent visitors whom he met there: François Coppée, Catulle Mendès, Maurice Bouchor, Philippe Burty, J. K. Huysmans, Henri Céard, Marius Roux, Léon Hennique, Bergerat, Toudouze, Dr. Pouchet, and Charpentier, the publisher. At intervals came Taine, Renan, Maxime Ducamp, and Maurice Sand.

applied to his own work, "Madame Bovary," in his anger and weariness at being incessantly complimented on it. For the rest, Zola tells us that the company "rattled through every subject, always reverting to literature, to the book or the play of the hour, or to some general question or venturesome theory; but, at the same time, excursions were made into every field, and neither men nor things were spared. Flaubert thundered, Tourgeneff told stories of exquisite originality and savour, Goncourt pronounced judgment on one matter and another with all his shrewdness and personal style of phraseology. Then Daudet acted his anecdotes in that charming manner of his, which made him the best of companions; while as for myself I did not shine at all, for I am a very poor conversationalist, and only worth anything when I feel a deep conviction on some subject, and fly into a passion."

To some of the aforementioned gatherings and dinners it will be necessary to refer again in the course of this narrative. What has been set down here will, however, indicate the nature of the companionship which came to Zola as he toiled along the path leading to success. He had not shaken off his old friends, he still gave his weekly dinners which one or another — Alexis, Marius Roux, Coste, Duranty, and Béliard, the painter, — attended, though some began to fall out of the ranks, carried hither and thither by their private interests. Meantime, he worked very zealously. In 1874, he completed his story, "La Conquête de Plassans," — the fourth volume of the Rougon-Macquart series — and ran it through "Le Siècle" as a serial. When it was published, soon afterwards, in volume form by Charpentier, there was a sufficient demand to justify the printing of a second edition of this tale of priestly intrigue in public and private life.[1]

But Zola's eyes were still turned towards the stage, partly because he desired to apply certain theories to play-writing, and partly because he knew that the successful dramatist advanced far more rapidly than the successful novelist along the path to fortune. Thus, having finished his three-act comedy, "Les Héritiers Rabourdin," [2] in which the gruesome was mingled with the farcical, he offered it to the Palais Royal Theatre. But the manager of that house only cared for amusing plays free from all lugubrious taint, his chief author being Labiche, whose name was synonymous with unadulterated merriment; so Zola soon carried his manuscript to M. Montigny of the Gymnase. Writing on July 23, 1874, to his friend and publisher, M. Charpentier, he gave the following account of the issue of his endeavours: —

> "My negotiations with Montigny have fallen through. He handed me back my manuscript in the most charming manner, vowing that he had a keen desire to stage a play of mine. He even gave me my *entrées* to the Gymnase, by way of consolation, no doubt. Briefly, my play frightened him, but it is certain that he long hesitated about it, and that the doors of his theatre will be open to me if I only undertake 'to be good.' As soon as my manuscript was returned to me I was eager to carry it elsewhere. Decidedly, it is a disease; one wants to be 'played,' whatever may be the chances. The only thing left for me to do was to knock at the door of the Théâtre de Cluny. I went there. And, yesterday, Weinschenk [the manager] accepted my play. It will pass before Flaubert's,[3] about the middle of September,

---

[1] "La Conquête de Plassans," 1st and 2d editions: Paris, Charpentier, 1874, 18mo, 406 pages; 3d edition, 1876, 402 pages; thirty-fourth thousand on sale in 1903.

[2] See *ante*, p. 144.

[3] This was a play called "Le Sexe Faible," which Flaubert had agreed to

heaven knows under what conditions, for the company frightens me terribly. But what would you have had me do? I had no alternative, I had to go to that galley to ensure myself some little peace of mind. It would have rendered me so unhappy to have left the manuscript lying in a drawer."

The Théâtre de Cluny was then a third or fourth rate little house in the Quartier Latin, and Zola's fears respecting its company were fully justified. To give an idea of the fate which befell his play it will be enough to mention that one of the "parts," that of Chapuzot, an octogenarian, was confided to a young fellow named Olona, who in his efforts to imitate an old man's voice ended by speaking like a "Punch." Nevertheless, there was no hissing at the first performance which was delayed until the 3d of November (1874); the demeanour of the audience being rather one of bewilderment, particularly when in the third act illness and death suddenly intruded into the midst of farce. But the critics did not hesitate. They damned the play even as they had damned "Thérèse Raquin," "Le Figaro" curtly declaring that it was repulsive, tiresome, and immoral; and after seventeen performances, given to well-nigh empty houses, except on Sundays when the shopkeepers and working-people of the district attended and laughed good-naturedly,[1] "Les Héritiers Rabourdin" disappeared from the stage without hope of revival.

But this was not Zola's only work during the year 1874. He had now moved from the Rue de La Condamine to 21, Rue St. Georges (now Rue des Apennins) at Batignolles.

---

supply to the Théâtre de Cluny, but before doing so he read it to his intimates, who gave it so unfavourable a reception that he renounced all idea of having it performed.

[1] Alexis, *l. c.*, p. 139.

Here again, unlike most Parisians, who live in flats, he had a house to himself, with a garden, both considerably larger than the previous ones. In the Rue de La Condamine he himself had attended to his garden, made a kennel for his dog, erected his own fowl and rabbit houses — for he was skilful with his hands — just like any other modestly circumstanced dweller in Suburbia. But in the Rue St. Georges his prosperity increased, and instead of employing a mere *femme-de-ménage* to help his wife in the housework, he was soon able to engage two servants, man and wife.

His increased prosperity was due to the good offices of his friend, Ivan Tourgeneff, who took no little interest in him. At this time Zola no longer wrote political articles for the Paris press, for editors deemed his pen too violent; and as he also carried revolutionary methods into literary discussion, he was unable to find in France any satisfactory outlet either for certain critical studies on eminent writers which he had often thought of undertaking, or for any adequate expression of his theories respecting fiction. In these circumstances Tourgeneff recommended him to a St. Petersburg review, the "Viestnik Yevropi," otherwise "The European Messenger." To this periodical Zola became a regular and well-paid contributor for several years. The essays and short stories which he wrote for it were naturally translated into Russian, in which language they became known long before the French text was printed.

It was also this Russian review that first issued "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret," the fifth instalment of the "Rougon-Macquarts" and one of the most romantic of all Zola's novels. He wrote it in the Rue St. Georges in the summer of 1874, after arranging for the publication in book form of ten short stories which he had contributed during recent years to newspapers, almanacs, and other periodicals. The little volume was called "Nouveaux Contes à Ninon," and the reception given to it by both the critics and the public was distinctly encouraging.[1] The former, however, cold-shouldered "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret," which was published by Charpentier in 1875, though this was the first of Zola's novels that reached, not a great sale certainly, but one which may fairly be called considerable for that period. In 1876 a sixth edition of it was reached, followed by another in the ensuing year.[2]

When "Abbé Mouret" was placed on the market, Zola, who seldom if ever rested, was already working on his next book, "Son Excellence Eugène Rougon," in which he dealt with the political side of the Second Empire and sketched the life of the Imperial Court at Compiègne. Some years previously, in 1865, when he was writing for "L'Événement," that journal had published a series of articles signed "D," chronicling the imperial sojourn at Compiègne; and these had been collected in a volume to which the fanciful subtitle of "Confidences d'un Valet de Chambre"[3] was given, though, in point of fact, the author was simply a journalist, recommended by Théophile Gautier for the express purpose of reporting the doings of the court during its *villegiatura*, and in that way refuting the thousand rumours of indescribable orgies at Compiègne, which circulated among the more credulous Parisians. From the record in question, a very accurate one, Zola, who, of course had never been a guest at Compiègne, derived considerable information, but sundry critics, unacquainted with the truth, twitted him for having placed reliance on back-stairs gossip, when in reality he had taken as his guide statements issued with the Emperor's express approval.

---

[1] "Nouveaux Contes à Ninon," 1st and 2d editions, Paris, Charpentier, 1874, 18mo, 311 pages, 3d edition, 1877; new editions containing the Rougon-Macquart genealogical tree, in 1878 and 1881; new edition, including 14 tales and sketches, in 1885 *et seq.*; ditto, 32mo, with 2 etchings, 1885; Conquet's edition, etched frontispiece and 30 vignettes, 2 vols., sm. 8vo, 1886.

[2] "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret," 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th editions, Paris, Charpentier, 1875, 18mo, 432 pages; 5th and 6th editions, 1876; 7th, 428 pages, 1877; fifty-second thousand on sale in 1903. Of late years eighty thousand copies have been sold of an illustrated edition in the "Collection Guillaume."

[3] "La Cour à Compiègne, Confidences d'un Valet de Chambre," Paris, Librairie du Petit Journal, 1866. 18mo, 303 pages. In E. A. Vizetelly's in-

But further information was given him by Flaubert, who had visited Compiègne more than once as a court guest. And Goncourt tells us that Flaubert, when questioned by Zola, proceeded to mimic the late sovereign in characteristic fashion, walking up and down with his figure bent, resting one hand on his back, and twirling his moustache with the other, while mumbling idiotic remarks. "Napoleon III," added Flaubert, by way of comment, "was unadulterated stupidity"; to which proposition Goncourt retorted, wittily and with great truth, that stupidity was usually loquacious, whereas the Emperor's had been silent stupidity. "It was that which made his strength, it allowed one to suppose everything."[1] No better judgment than this was ever passed on Napoleon III. For twenty years the world regarded him as "deep," though, in reality, he was in many respects a fool, one who would never even have

---

troduction to the English version of "Son Excellence Eugène Rougon" ("His Excellency," London, Chatto, and New York, Macmillan, 1897 *et seq.*), it is stated in error that the articles first appeared in "Le Figaro," whereas it was the latter's companion-print, "L'Événement," which issued them.

[1] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. V, p. 190 (March 7, 1875).

reigned over France had it not been for the energy and acumen of his bastard half-brother, the Duke de Morny.

Apropos of the latter, Goncourt mentions that one day when Alphonse Daudet, who had been in the Duke's employment, was giving various particulars about him, Zola expressed a keen regret that he had not possessed this information in time to use it in "Son Excellence," which contains but a very imperfect sketch of Morny under the name of Marsy. In a discussion which ensued, Zola evinced great eagerness to put everything into his books — that is everything he learnt which might be germane to his subjects and likely to cast light upon them. On the whole, however, he was far less "personal" than Daudet. Both in "Son Excellence Eugène Rougon" and in his later novel, "Paris," although many of the characters suggested well-known people, almost every one of them was a blend, so to say, of three or four originals, whereas Daudet, sketching his characters from the life, often modified them so little that those who knew their Paris could not regard some of his books otherwise than as pillories.

The writing of "Son Excellence Eugène Rougon" proved a somewhat laborious task for Zola, the period selected for the story being largely antecedent to his participation in newspaper life, from which he had learnt so much both politically and socially. And his desire to be scrupulously accurate in all essential particulars led him to undertake a variety of fatiguing researches. Hard work, indeed excessive work, for he wrote regularly for the Russian review, and penned some Parisian correspondence every day for "Le Sémaphore" of Marseilles, besides proceeding with his novel, again reduced him to a nervous condition, and one day, when he was with Goncourt and others, he complained that while he wrote he often fancied he could see mice scampering about him, or birds flying away on one hand or the other. That spring (1875) others also felt "run down," as the saying goes. Tourgeneff, for instance, complained of his nerves, and Flaubert was haunted by the idea that there was always somebody behind him while he worked.[1]

At last, when the summer came and his book was finished, Zola resolved to seek a change, though not absolute rest, for idleness was repugnant to him. His circumstances had now greatly improved; M. Charpentier had torn up the original agreement for the Rougon-Macquart series, and opened his cash-box, and Zola had at last liquidated the liabilities which he had incurred by the failure of Lacroix. So, with his wife and mother, he betook himself to a little Norman watering-place, St. Aubin-sur-Mer, lying between the mouth of the Orne and the Calvados rocks, and reached, in those days, by coach from Caen.

It was there, as Alexis relates, that he planned his next book, "L'Assommoir," the idea of which had occurred to him before his departure from Paris. In his previous volumes he had dealt with the Imperial Court, the Parisian society, the political world, the provincial life, the clerical intrigues of the Second Empire, and it was only in "Le Ventre de Paris" that he had cast some side-lights upon the working class of the capital. They, however, deserved an entire volume to themselves, and Zola felt that he could write one, based largely on his own personal knowledge of their habits and customs; for in his days of poverty he had dwelt among them at Montrouge, and in the Rue St. Jacques, and again on the Boulevard Montparnasse. Besides what he had written about them in a few newspaper articles or short stories, such as "Le Chomage," "Mon voisin Jacques" and "Le Forgeron,"[1] which will be found in the "Nouveaux Contes à Ninon," he remembered a great many things, funerals, festivities, and junketings. He had discovered, too, a suitable title — "L'Assommoir" — in Alfred Delvau's slang dictionary, and it was this circumstance which, when he had written two chapters of the book in his usual style, suddenly inspired him with the idea of penning it in the real vernacular of the Parisian masses, not the special slang of thieves and prostitutes, such as Eugène Sue had employed, and, in part, invented, in "Les Mystères de Paris," but in the current *langage populaire*, understood by everybody.[2]

---

[1] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. V, p. 202 (April 25, 1875).

It was during Zola's stay at St. Aubin, face to face with the sea, — whose influence was not lost upon him for, as will be shown, it suggested in part a later work, "La Joie de Vivre," — that he mapped out this book on the Parisian *prolétaire*, which was to raise him to fame; and Alexis tells us that though he already had the chief scenes of the story in his mind he was for a time at a loss for a suitable intrigue which would weld them well together. The idea of taking a girl of the people, who stumbles and has two children by her seducer, then marries another man, establishes herself in business by dint of hard work, but is borne down by the conduct of her husband, who becomes a drunkard, had previously occurred to him, figuring, indeed, in the original genealogical tree which he had drawn up for his series, but he felt that the husband's drunkenness might not fully account for the wife's downfall, and he remained at a loss how to proceed until, all at once, he was inspired to bring the woman's seducer back into her home. That would make everything possible, and he decided to model his story accordingly.

---

[1] In "Le Forgeron" one will find the first idea of Goujet of "L'Assommoir"; while "Mon voisin Jacques" is the original of Bazouge, the mute.

[2] Alexis, *l. c.*, p. 109.

He busied himself with "L'Assommoir" on his return to Paris in the autumn, and arranged for the "serialisation" of his completed novel, "Son Excellence Eugène Rougon," in "Le Siècle" early in the following year, 1876.[1] He was then in high spirits. "Fortune," he said to Edmond de Goncourt, "was at last finding its way to his home." Indeed, a stroke of luck had befallen him. A daily evening paper, "Le Bien Public," had appointed him its dramatic critic at a salary of six thousand francs a year. This journal had been started with the support of Thiers, since whose resignation of the presidency of the Republic in 1873 France had been governed in a reactionary spirit by MacMahon's ministers. During that troublous period "Le Bien Public," whose connection with Thiers was well known, rendered good service to the Republican cause, first rallying many hesitating people, then becoming more and more democratic, and helping on that alliance of the middle class and the *prolétariat* which saved France from monarchical intrigues and resulted in MacMahon's downfall. Zola was delighted to join the paper, particularly as it allowed him all freedom in his dramatic criticisms, which were written in his usual trenchant style. Of course he had to give to them some of the time he had hitherto allotted to his books, but he was not afraid of additional work, particularly when it was of a nature to bring him nearer to the Parisian stage, on which, in spite of every rebuff, he still dreamt of triumphing. Moreover, the increase in his income was very welcome; with the salaries he received from "Le Bien Public" and "Le Sémaphore" — for which he still wrote — the proceeds of his contributions to the Russian review, which some months amounted to eight hundred francs, and the money accruing from his books, his income, in the early part of 1876, before the serial publication of "L'Assommoir," represented quite twenty-five thousand francs, and perhaps thirty thousand francs a year.[1] But he decided to offer his new story to "Le Bien Public"; and that he could now command good terms is shown by the fact that the paper agreed to pay him ten thousand francs for the serial rights without even seeing his manuscript, which, by the way, was not ready, though he had given information respecting the subject he meant to treat.

---

[1] A little later it was issued in book form: "Son Excellence Eugène Rougon," Paris, Charpentier, 1876, 18mo, 466 pages. The demand was smaller than that for the previous volume, "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret"; and in 1903 only the thirty-sixth thousand was on sale.

The serial issue began in June (1876) and there was an immediate outcry. Whatever might be thought of Zola's novels in book form, they were not liked by the newspaper readers of those days; and, in the case of "L'Assommoir," there were not only complaints of immorality, but the author was accused, ludicrously enough, of slandering the masses, insulting the working classes. The latter charge alarmed the director of "Le Bien Public" far more than the first did. Important political issues were then at stake, and it was essential that the working-man should not be offended! Of course people judged the story merely by the instalments as they appeared, and these as yet gave little indication of what it would be when completed. Thus a very narrow view was taken by some readers, while others were more particularly horrified by the slang in which the work abounded, complaining notably of its appearance, not only in the dialogue but in the descriptive and narrative passages, into which Zola had introduced it with the express object of suggesting that this was a story of the masses told by one of themselves. Briefly, in all respects, the outcry became so great that in July the director of "Le Bien Public" decided to cease publication. Nevertheless, the paper honestly paid Zola the full amount specified in the agreement.

---

[1] From £1,000 to £1,200, or from about $5,000 to $6,000.

At this moment M. Catulle Mendès again came to the rescue, and, for a nominal sum, a thousand francs or so, Zola handed him the remainder of his manuscript for publication in "La République des Lettres"; then, leaving his literary bombshell to complete its work, betook himself to Piriac, on the Breton coast, between Vannes and St. Nazaire, for a holiday. In Paris the periodical edited by M. Mendès suddenly leaped into notoriety. It supplied the latter part of "L'Assommoir" gratuitously to those subscribers of "Le Bien Public" who desired to read it; but at the same time its sales increased largely, for so much was said about this extraordinary story, so violent were the attacks upon it, that many, who as yet had seen nothing of it, wished to ascertain its character and form their own opinions.

Amid all the hubbub, a well-known Parisian journalist of that period, Tony Révillon, who had catered for the working classes since the latter years of the Empire, meeting Paul Alexis one day in the autumn, said to him: "Tell Zola to make his mind easy. His book will sell like hot cakes. . . . 'L'Assommoir' will be a wonderful success."

In a pecuniary sense, such was indeed the case directly M. Charpentier published the book in 1877.[1] Of the ordinary edition fifty thousand copies — a very large figure for those days — were soon sold, and at the end of 1879, eighty thousand had been disposed of; these being independent of a "popular" illustrated edition, issued in fifty-nine "parts" at ten centimes apiece, forty thousand copies of which were disseminated chiefly among the Parisian working classes (whom the story was said to libel) in the course of 1878 alone. From 1877 onward an unexampled controversy raged round the book as well as round Zola's principles and methods generally — a controversy to which additional zest was imparted both by a dramatic adaptation of the story, which drew all Paris to the Théâtre de l'Ambigu, and by the publication in French of some of the articles on French literature and literary men which Zola had written for the Russian review. More fuel was added to the fire by a pamphlet he penned and called "La République française et la Littérature," and by a series of papers he contributed to "Le Voltaire" and collected a little later under the title of "Le Roman Expérimental." Wherever one went in Paris one heard allusion to or discussion of Zola, "L'Assommoir," and "naturalism." The newspapers were full of articles: the author was attacked by such men as Henri

---

[1] "L'Assommoir," Paris, Charpentier, 1877, 18mo, 573 pages; one hundred and twenty-seventh thousand on sale in 1893 when the Rougon-Macquart series was completed; one hundred and fifty-first thousand reached in 1903. Illustrated edition: Paris, Marpon and Flammarion, 1878, large 8vo, title, 466 pages, with 62 wood engravings after Gill, Clairin, Leloir, etc. Issued originally in parts (see above), the volume was priced at 6 francs. It has been frequently reprinted.

Fouquier in "Le XIX^e Siècle," Francisque Sarcey in "Le Temps," Jules Claretie in "La Presse," Gaucher in "La Revue Bleue." "La Revue de France" joined in the hostile chorus and so, too, did the Olympian "Revue des Deux Mondes"; while "La Vie littéraire" and "La Jeune France" joined "La République des Lettres" in defending the much-abused author.

But pamphlets also rained upon Paris; there was "Zola, Pape et César," by Madame Arnault; "Monsieur Zola," by "Papa Cadet"; a "Petit Traité de Littérature Naturaliste," by "Camille B." and Albert Vanier; "Naturalisme ou Réalisme," by F. de Bus; "M. Zola et son Assommoir," by Frédéric Erbs; "Apropos de l'Assommoir," by Édouard Rod, and several others. But mere pamphlets did not suffice; there came "poems" like "En r'venant d' l'Assommoir," by Galipaux; parodies like "L'Assommoir du Cirque Franconi" and "L'Assommoir pour rire," by Blondelet and Beaumaine; and finally there were lectures both against Zola and in defence of him, the most notable of the latter, one which particularly angered both the conservative critics and the sensitive Parnassians, being delivered by M. Léon Hennique in the Salle des Conférences on the Boulevard des Capucines.

To a few of the matters enumerated above, the production of "L'Assommoir" as a play, and the publication in volume form of some of Zola's literary papers, it will be necessary to refer again in following the thread of this narrative; but they have been mentioned here in order that the reader may at once form some idea of the sensation which the appearance of "L'Assommoir" caused, first in the literary world of Paris, whence it spread throughout the reading public.

In the literary annals of France, 1876, 1877, and 1878 must always rank as the years of "L'Assommoir." Yet they were by no means barren in other respects. They cover the period when Victor Hugo published, not only a new series of "La Légende des Siècles," but also "L'Art d'être Grandpère" and "L'Histoire d'un Crime." And other poets were raising their voices: Leconte de Lisle was issuing his translation of Sophocles, Mallarmé his "Après-midi d'un Faune," Dierx his "Amants," Anatole France his "Noces Corinthiennes," Richepin his "Chanson des Gueux." And fiction, as usual, poured from the printing presses of France. Flaubert's "Trois Contes"; Daudet's "Jack" and "Le Nabab"; Goncourt's "La Fille Élisa"; Octave Feuillet's "Amours de Philippe"; George Sand's last stories, "La Tour de Percemont" and "Marianne"; Ferdinand Fabre's best book, "L'Abbé Tigrane," were then first offered to the reading public. And going further afield one finds "Le Train 17" and "La Maison Vide," by Jules Claretie; "Les Batailles du Mariage" and "Sans Famille," by Hector Malot; "Samuel Brohl," by Cherbuliez; "Raymonde," by André Theuriet; "Michel Strogoff," by Jules Verne; "L'Homme de la Croix-aux-Bœufs," by Léon Cladel, also appearing at this time. But none of these, and indeed, briefly, no novel, or play, or poem, or historical or philosophical work of the time stands forth conspicuously, preëminently, as "L'Assommoir" does, to give its name to the date, to mark the period, to indicate a climax or an evolution in French literature.

Before "L'Assommoir," the critics had often treated Zola's books and theories with silent contempt, but they could do so no longer. They were at last compelled to recognise that a new force had arisen, and that they must be up and doing if they wished to prevent it from gaining the mastery. As happens at every literary evolution, as was the case when the Romantic supplanted the Classic school, all the older men, and, indeed, nearly all of any age who had acquired a recognised position, were against Zola, his adherents being mostly young writers whose positions were not yet made. It has been mentioned that some of the friends of his youth and early manhood had dropped away from him, in a measure by the force of circumstances. But "Le Ventre de Paris" and "L'Assommoir" brought him others, and in particular there were five young men of great promise who, for a time, became known as his "band." Taking them by order of seniority, one may place first the ever-faithful Paul Alexis, a Provençal, in 1877 thirty years of age. Second came Joris Karl Huysmans, a Parisian of Dutch origin, nine and twenty years old, and already the author of a volume of prose poems suggestive of Baudelaire, and a novel, "Marthe." Next there was Guy de Maupassant, a Norman, seven and twenty, introduced to Zola by their mutual friend and master, Flaubert; then Henri Céard, a thoroughbred Parisian, six and twenty, who without introduction had called upon Zola one Sunday to tell him that he had read his books and admired them; and, finally, Léon Hennique, a native of Guadeloupe, who numbered but five and twenty years against the seven and thirty which Zola completed at the time when his first great book was published.[1]

---

[1] To the information given above it may be added that Alexis's first noteworthy work was a play, "Celle qu'on n'épouse pas" (Gymnase, 1879) followed by "La Fin de Lucie Pellegrin," a novel, 1880. Maupassant's first prose volume was "La Maison Tellier," 1881, following one of verses, 1880. Céard's first novel was "Une Belle Journée," 1880; and Hennique's "La

Every Thursday, for some years, those five young men, two of whom, Maupassant and Huysmans, afterwards rose to eminence, visited Zola and talked "literature" with him, even as on Sundays he and they visited Gustave Flaubert. The latter, amid all the hubbub and controversy provoked by "L'Assommoir," felt that Zola was going too far, at least farther than he, Flaubert, would have gone. He always underrated his own realism —or naturalism, if one prefer that term — as displayed in "Madame Bovary," as well as his own philosophy, outlined in "L'Éducation sentimentale" and "La Tentation de St. Antoine"; and if Zola's account of him be accurate, his one ambition was to be known and remembered as a stylist, a master of impeccable French. He even denied that "Madame Bovary" marked any evolution in fiction, he shut his eyes to the deductions which others drew from it, and thus, when he found himself confronted by Zola's venturesome theories, he was at first at a loss to account for them. In one sense his astonishment was amusing: it suggested the surprise of the cause at the sight of so remarkable an effect. But if he twitted Zola about his naturalist professions of faith he did so, as Goncourt observes, "avec de très grands coups de chapeau" for he fully recognised the ability of the man who claimed to be his disciple. One thing which he did not like was the eagerness with which Zola accepted controversy and proclaimed his doctrines on all possible occasions, for this seemed to be too suggestive of self-advertisement.

Devouée," 1878. Both the latter as well as Alexis may be best classed as playwrights, their later and principal literary work having been done for the stage. Like Maupassant and Huysmans, however, they contributed with Zola to "Les Soirées de Medan," 1880, which will be noticed in its proper place.

Zola, however, replied very naturally, frankly, and boldly, that he, Flaubert, possessed a small fortune and was therefore able to disregard all sorts of considerations, whereas he, Zola, had been obliged to earn his living by his pen and undertake at times all kinds of writing, even contemptible work. "What I write," he added, "may be divided into two parts. There are my books by which I am judged, and by which I desire to be judged; and there are my critical notices in 'Le Bien Public,' my Russian articles, and my correspondence for Marseilles which I regard as of no account, which I reject, and which I only undertake in order to help on my books. I first placed a nail in position and with the stroke of a hammer I drove it half an inch into the brain of the public, then with a second blow I drove it in an inch. Well, my hammer is the newspaper work which I myself do round my own books."[1]

Nothing could have been more frank than this, not even his remark on the same occasion — in reply evidently to some criticism of Flaubert's, which Goncourt does not exactly specify, — that he cared not a rap for the word "naturalism," and yet intended to repeat it, because things required christening in order that the public might regard them as new.[2] In all this one traces the determination to succeed at any cost, the fighting spirit which had prompted Zola to write to Antony Valabrègue, more than ten years previously, that he belonged to an impatient age, that if he did not trample others under foot they would pass over him, and that he did not desire to be crushed by fools. Thus, whatever might be his contempt for the weapons of his time

---

[1] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. V, pp. 314–315.

[2] It is probable that Flaubert had questioned the novelty of "Naturalism."

— advertisement and pushfulness — he readily made use of them, feeling that if he neglected to do so, amid all the stress, all the fierce competition around him, he might well go under and fail to reach the goal, in spite of the talent of which he was conscious. The battle of the age was the keenest there had ever been, a man could only triumph by incessantly thrusting himself forward, and Zola, for his part, did so without hesitation.

VII

THE ADVANCE OF NATURALISM

1877–1881

"Une Page d'Amour" — The portrayal of Love — Zola buys a house at Médan — His play, "Le Bouton de Rose" — He is accused of stealing the plot of "Une Page d'Amour" — He attacks contemporary French novelists — Opinions of Feuillet and Dumas *fils* on Zola — "The Republic and Literature" — Zola and the Legion of Honour — Flaubert and "Bouvard" — A Cabinet Council negatives the decoration of Zola — "L'Assommoir" as a play — Zola and Mr. George Moore — The effect of affluence on Zola — The transformation of Médan — Zola's studies — Humanitarianism enters into his literary conceptions — Scientific fiction and its aim — Preparations for "Nana" — La Païva — The courtesans of the Second Empire — "Nana" is published in "Le Voltaire" — The facial mask of small-pox — "Nana" as a book — Idealism and Naturalism: attractive and repulsive vice — "Les Soirées de Médan" — Maupassant's "Boule de Suif" — Hereditary insanity and strong passions — Death of Gustave Flaubert — Zola's essay on Flaubert — Death of Zola's mother — His campaign in "Le Figaro" — His attack on Hugo's "L'Ane" — He assails Gambetta — His article on "Drunken Slaves" and defence of "L'Assommoir" — "Nana" as a play — Léontine Massin plays Nana in real life as well as on the stage — Zola's "Romanciers Naturalistes," "Documents Littéraires," "Naturalisme au Théâtre" and "Auteurs Dramatiques" — His life of unflagging industry.

At an early period of the controversies provoked by "L'Assommoir," that is when its publication had been transferred to "Le Bien Public," Zola quitted Paris for L'Estaque, a tiny village nestling below precipitous mountains on the shore of the Golfe des Crottes, beyond which spreads the Mediterranean, with the various islands, including the Château d'If of "Monte Cristo," which mark the approach to the port of Marseilles. In this quiet retreat, where life among the tunny-fishers was rather primitive, the novelist began to write "Une Page d'Amour," which he had planned before leaving Paris. Edmond de Goncourt mentions an amusing discussion started by Zola, apropos of this book, at a dinner given to Tourgeneff, who was leaving for Russia. Love, in Zola's opinion, did not master one so absolutely as some pretended; and, said he, phenomena similar to those which might be observed in love were also to be found in friendship and patriotism. For his part, he had never been madly in love, and therefore found it difficult to depict such a state of things in others. Flaubert and Goncourt admitted a similar incapacity, arising from the same cause, and it was agreed that the only one of the party whom experience might have qualified to portray the great passion adequately, was Tourgeneff, who, however, was unfortunately deficient in the necessary critical sense.

The question whether Zola's portrayal of love in "Une Page d'Amour" was adequate is certainly open to doubt; and whatever the power and beauty of the book's pictures of Paris, as viewed from the Trocadéro, at sunrise, at sundown, at night, in a storm, and under the snow, one may demur to the often expressed opinion that they were the best he ever limned. They doubtless cost him an effort, but after the great labour which the writing of "L'Assommoir" had involved, "Une Page d'Amour," with its few characters and its narrow scope of action, was almost a restful book. It should be observed, indeed, that Zola seldom penned two great panoramic works in succession. His own explanation of the course he took in writing such comparatively quiet books as "Une Page d'Amour," "La Joie de Vivre" and "Le Rêve" between works of crowded incident like "L'Assommoir," "Nana," "Germinal," "La Terre," and "La

Bête Humaine," was that he wished to diversify his series as much as possible; but it is also certain that he often found it necessary to husband his energies, to allow himself breathing time, as it were, between two great efforts.

He spent some months at L'Estaque writing "Une Page d'Amour," and on returning to Paris late in the autumn of 1877, enriched as he was by the sales of "L'Assommoir," he removed his home to a handsome third-floor flat, 23, Rue de Boulogne. Then, while searching the environs of Paris for a country *pied-à-terre,* a convenient retreat for the following summer — when the first great Exhibition since the Franco-German War was to be held in Paris — he came upon a little house which took his fancy. It stood on the verge of the village of Médan, which overlooks the Seine, beyond Poissy. Zola merely wished to rent it, but the owner desired a purchaser, not a tenant, and in the end the novelist bought the little place for nine thousand francs.[1] A few weeks later, says Alexis, builders, painters, and upholsterers were turned into the house to repair and fit it for occupation, and for several years they remained busy there on the various enlargements which followed and the other work which became necessary.

Already in 1876, having acquired by his contributions to "Le Bien Public" what may be at least called a conspicuous position as a dramatic critic of very absolute views, Zola, still hankering for theatrical success, had written a farce called "Le Bouton de Rose" intended for the Palais Royal Theatre. At the beginning of 1877 the parts were distributed, and some rehearsals even took place; then, however, the success of the work seeming doubtful, it was postponed;

---

[1] £360 = about $1,800.

and Zola himself, somewhat diffident as to its merit, at last decided to withdraw it altogether. But early in 1878 the great uproar occasioned by "L'Assommoir" inspired the directors of the Palais Royal Theatre with a fresh desire to stage this play by a man whose name was now on everybody's lips. They urged him to consent, and he ultimately did so, making various alterations which the directors deemed to be advisable. The play was then rehearsed again, and both the managers and the actors, now as sanguine as they had previously been doubtful, imagined that it would prove a triumph. But at the first performance (May 6, 1878) the audience, after receiving the first act with favour, became angry during the second, and hissed the third freely. In vain did Geoffroy, the leading comedian, endeavour to announce the author's name according to usage; such a tremendous din arose when he appeared before the footlights, that he was unable to make himself heard. Meantime Zola, in the slips, was saying to the crestfallen directors: "You see I was right. You insisted on staging the piece in spite of me. Your earlier decision to drop it was the better one."

In accordance with custom, he had arranged to celebrate the first performance by a supper at Véfour's. In a sense the repast was a funereal one, though it proved by no means doleful, for Zola took the failure of his play right cheerfully, merely regretting that he would now have to modify the order of the work which he had proposed to undertake that year. Had "Le Bouton de Rose" been successful, he had intended to begin another play, based on his novel "La Curée," but that would now have to wait while he started on the next novel of his series. Some days later, when dining at M. Charpentier's, he told Goncourt that the failure of

"Le Bouton de Rose" made him feel quite young again. The success of "L'Assommoir" had unnerved him, whereas he now seemed to have got back to his twentieth year. He needed to be imbued with an angry fighting spirit, said he, in order to write the many volumes which were required to complete his Rougon-Macquart series.

"Une Page d'Amour" was about this time issued serially by "Le Bien Public,' whose readers took it more quietly than they had taken "L'Assommoir"; but when it appeared as a volume[1] Zola was accused of having stolen his plot from a novel called "Les Amours d'un Homme Laid," by a Madame Berton, *née* Samson. It may be said at once that there are several points of resemblance between the plots of these stories. A young widow, a doctor, and a sickly child are prominent characters in both. At the same time there is great difference of treatment; and Zola, on hearing of the accusation, which first emanated from a journal called "La Paix Sociale," at once wrote to it: "I have never read Madame Berton-Samson's story, and until today I was ignorant of the existence both of the author and of the work."

To an unprejudiced person it may well seem that the similarity existing between his story and Madame Berton's was due solely to the long arm of coincidence. But of course his enemies asserted that he lied. According to them he was always lying: and indeed everything he wrote, from the time of attaining any prominence, was denounced as being wholly or in part plagiarism. Even "L'Assommoir" was alleged to be merely a crib from Denis Poulot's "Le Sublime";[1] and, briefly, his adversaries would not allow that he was possessed of a single spark of originality.

---

[1] "Une Page d'Amour," Paris, Charpentier, 1878, 18mo, vii–486 pages (genealogical tree of the Rougon-Macquarts); seventy-fifth thousand on sale in 1893 when the series was completed; ninety-seventh thousand in 1903. Illustrated edition: Paris, Librairie du Bibliophile (Jouaust), 1884, 2 vols. crown 8vo, iv–261 and 287 pages; portrait and ten designs by Ed. Dantan, etched by Duvivier, ornaments by Giacomelli. Impressions on various papers, Dutch, India, Japanese, etc. Another illustrated edition, Paris, 1894, with etchings and woodcuts designed by F. Thévenot.

At this time (1878) he had so many irons in the fire, as the saying goes, that it is difficult to follow his work in strict chronological order. We find him preparing his novel "Nana," collecting materials for it, devising its plot; penning theatrical criticisms for "Le Bien Public," contributing to "Le Voltaire"; planning with Messrs. Busnach and Gastineau a dramatic version of "L'Assommoir"; and writing a series of papers, chiefly on "Les Romanciers Naturalistes," for the "Viestnik Yevropi" of St. Petersburg. One of those papers, a general *critique* of contemporary French novelists, their methods and their abilities, was a slashing and in some respects unjust onslaught on all who did not conform to the tenets of the Naturalist school. It was published by the Russian review in September (1878), and a month later was denounced by a Swiss periodical, "La Bibliothèque Universelle," which gave a *résumé* of its contents. Such, however, was then the "insularity" of France with respect to literary happenings abroad, that December arrived before a Parisian journal, "Le Figaro," discovered the obnoxious paper and proceeded to rate its author. This it did in its most virulent style, borrowing for the occasion a variety of slang epithets from the pages of "L'Assommoir." And as a crowning stroke Zola was accused of arrant cowardice. He did not dare to attack his contemporaries in the French language and in a French journal, it was said; he sought a foreign country and a foreign tongue for his venomous outpourings.

---

[1] "Le Sublime, ou le Travailleur comme il est et ce qu'il peut être," Paris, Charpentier, 1865.

His reply to this accusation was characteristic. He offered "Le Figaro" the original French manuscript of his article — which differed in many respects from the *résumé* issued by the Swiss review — and "Le Figaro," which had denounced some of his remarks as unprintable, speedily inserted the entire paper in its literary supplement.[1] The uproar in literary circles then became terrific. Among those whom Zola assailed were Hector Malot, Ferdinand Fabre, Octave Feuillet, Victor Cherbuliez, Edmond About, Louis Ulbach, Erckmann-Chatrian, Paul Féval, Jules Claretie, and Léon Cladel; and it was pointed out that the only writers whom he praised or spared were those whose works were issued by his own publisher, M. Charpentier! Of course, said the quidnuncs, he must have been paid for this service; M. Charpentier could not have given him less than ten thousand francs for his article, though if M. Calmann-Lévy, for instance, had offered him twenty thousand, he would doubtless have written up that publisher's writers instead of abusing them.

As already mentioned, the article in question was in some measure unjust, for it assumed *a priori* that only the Naturalist school of fiction was entitled to live; but at the same time it contained some sound criticism. Nobody nowadays would deny the proposition that Hector Malot, in whom at one time many hopes had centred, never produced a really great book; that Jules Claretie also, in spite of his many undoubted gifts, never rose above the second rank as a novelist; that Cladel rendered himself ridiculous by the affectation of his style, and that men like About and Feuillet had greatly declined at the period when Zola wrote. But, naturally enough, these, and all the others whom he named, disliked to be told to their faces that they had always been or had become inferior men; and thus no little wrath was kindled in many directions. There was, however, one man who not only showed no resentment but unhesitatingly acknowledged his own great admiration for Zola's work. And this, strange as it may seem, was Octave Feuillet, who freely expressed himself in that sense both to his friend, Adrien Marx, and to the present writer. The latter had occasion to call upon him with respect to one of his last books, and, some general conversation on literary matters supervening, Feuillet mentioned Zola, saying that he had at first found it almost impossible to read the writings of the Naturalist master, but having forced himself to do so, his feeling of repulsion had departed, leaving sympathy and admiration in its place. Another famous writer whom Zola attacked even more bitterly than he attacked Feuillet, one with whom he had many a literary duel — Alexandre Dumas *fils* — also ended by expressing very kindly sentiments. "My literary standpoint," he said to the present writer, "is not the same as Zola's. On some matters no agreement between us is possible. But he is a strong man; and," added Dumas bluffly, with a momentary flash of the paternal manner, "what I particularly like about him is his damned frankness."[1]

---

[1] "Le Figaro," Supplément Littéraire, December 22, 1878.

---

[1] It was as the Paris correspondent of various English newspapers that the writer became acquainted with a good many French literary men. A

Later, when Zola became a candidate for the French Academy, Dumas *fils* was one of his most consistent supporters.[1] Jules Claretie also evinced an equally forgiving disposition.

As for Zola, his literary views certainly became more liberal as he grew older; but at the period one has now reached he was in his most arbitrary and dogmatic mood, going so far as to suggest in a pamphlet that each *régime* must have its appropriate literature, that Naturalist literature alone was suited to the Republic, and that the Republic itself must prove Naturalist, or otherwise would assuredly collapse. "By Naturalism," said he, "I mean analytical and experimental methods based on facts and human documents. There must be agreement between the social movement, which is the cause, and literature, which is the effect. If the Republic, blind as to itself, and failing to understand that it exists by the force of a scientific formula, should begin to persecute that formula in literature, this would be a sign that the Republic is not ripe for facts, and that it must once again give place to one, that is dictatorship."[2]

The pamphlet we have quoted was issued early in 1879. Some months previously both Gustave Flaubert and Alphonse Daudet, being well acquainted with M. Agénor Bardoux, an Auvergnat poetaster and politician appointed Minister of Public Instruction, had suggested to him that Zola, who by "L'Assommoir" had now risen to a con-

---

reference to the Paris letters in the first volumes of the "Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News" will show that the writer at one time dealt largely with the French stage. In that connection he was fortunate enough to secure the favour of Dumas *fils* to whom he was indebted for many little kindnesses.

[1] Zola to Vizetelly, November, 1898.

[2] "La République Française et la Littérature," 8vo, Paris, Charpentier, 1879. The text of this pamphlet was added by Zola to the collection of papers entitled "Le Roman Expérimental," which he issued in 1880.

spicuous position, ought to be made a knight of the Legion of Honour.[1] Daudet, in this matter, was actuated by friendship and admiration, and Flaubert deemed himself to be under a great obligation to Zola. It seems that while Flaubert was writing his "Bouvard et Pécuchet" (which did not appear till after his death), he had often spoken of it to his friends in a somewhat mysterious manner, never actually giving the names of his characters, but referring to them merely by their initials, B. and P. Zola was then working on "Son Excellence Eugène Rougon," and one day, when he and Flaubert met at a lunch given by M. Charpentier, he mentioned that a capital name had occurred to him for one of his characters, this name being Bouvard, which, with its suggestion of blotting-paper, was certainly a fit appellation for a civil service scribe. It so happened — such is coincidence — that Zola and Flaubert proposed to bestow it on much the same type of man; but the former, of course, was quite ignorant of his friend's intentions, for Flaubert, restricting himself to the initial B., had never allowed the word Bouvard to escape his lips. When it fell from Zola's, the author of "Madame Bovary" was greatly upset. "He became quite strange," wrote Zola on subsequently relating the incident, "and after lunch he took me to the bottom of Charpentier's garden, where, with a great show of emotion, he implored me to surrender the name of Bouvard to him. I assented, laughing; but he remained very grave, plainly touched, and even declared that he would not have persevered with his book if I had insisted on using the name. He looked upon his work as being entirely in those two names Bouvard and Pécuchet, and could not picture it without them."[1]

---

[1] Alexis, *l. c.*, p. 190 *et seq.*; Adolphe Brisson in "Le Temps," October 3, 1902.

Now Flaubert was one of the best-hearted men in the world. He regarded Zola's trifling concession as an act of great generosity, and it was to mark his sense of it that he solicited for his friend the Cross of the Legion of Honour. Pressed both by Daudet and Flaubert, M. Bardoux showed himself very favourably disposed; and when, in accordance with usage, he was visited by Zola, he told him straightly he would be gazetted on the next National Fête-day July 14, 1878. That date came and went, however, and Zola's name did not appear in the "Journal Officiel" — the cross promised to him going, instead, to Ferdinand Fabre. Other occasions presented themselves, Bardoux was often urged to keep his promise, but as often evaded it, and of course when the uproar provoked by Zola's paper on his fellow-novelists supervened, it afforded a good excuse for shelving the matter altogether. Meantime the affair had become common talk in certain literary circles, and Zola, who felt that he was being made ridiculous, had more than once threatened to fling the cross in Bardoux's face if he should eventually tender it. Alexis, in recounting the affair, throws virtually all the blame on the Minister; but the latter, after various paltry and untruthful excuses, which certainly put him in a bad light, told Edmond de Goncourt that if he had failed to keep his promise it was not his fault, but really that of his colleagues in the Government.[2]

It really seems to be the case that the question whether

---

[1] "Les Romanciers Naturalistes," p. 204.

[2] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. VI (January 21, 1879).

Zola should be decorated was made an affair of State, solemnly debated by the Council of Ministers at the Elysée Palace, Marshal MacMahon being in the chair, probably with his usual cigar between his lips, and his usual bottle of green Chartreuse standing handy on a cheffonnier, in order that he might help himself whenever "he felt so disposed," which, according to the scandal-mongers of the day, was pretty often. And the brave, honest, and narrow-minded Marshal, who — perhaps at his wife's instigation — absolutely refused to promote the impious Renan from the rank of chevalier to that of officer of the Legion of Honour, was in thorough agreement with all the Ministers who opposed the unlucky Bardoux when he asked that the red ribbon might be conferred on the obscene Zola. On his side, the latter, ignorant of the real circumstances of the case, and more and more annoyed by the spiteful allusions to the affair which appeared in some of the newspapers, issued an open letter formally signifying his renunciation of the red ribbon, with the result that for some years there was no further question of "decorating" the foremost novelist of France.

On January 18, 1879, the Ambigu Theatre gave the first performance of the dramatic version of "L'Assommoir" prepared by Messrs. Busnach and Gastineau, who, in point of fact, had been largely assisted by Zola, though his name did not appear on the bills, and he allowed all the merit of the play's success to be attributed to his colleagues. Goncourt tells us that during the rehearsals his melancholy mien quite chilled the actors, who by no means anticipated a success.[1] While the first performance was in progress

---

[1] "Journal des Goncourt, Vol. VI (January 21, 1878).

Zola sat reading in the manager's private room, and on the fall of the curtain his friends repaired thither to inform him that, apart from a little hissing, everything had gone off satisfactorily. Nevertheless, the critics attacked the play, an English writer, George Augustus Sala, evincing particular distress in a long article which recalled Sarcey's customary brief verdict: "That man Zola makes me ill."[1]

But all Paris had read "L'Assommoir" as a novel, and wished to see it on the stage;[2] and, besides, even the critics could not deny that Madame Hélène Petit's impersonation of the unhappy Gervaise was a great personal triumph. Thus crowds flocked to the Théâtre de l'Ambigu, whose director, Henri Chabrillat, an ex-journalist and novelist, who had commanded the Francs-tireurs de la Presse during the Franco-German War, suddenly found himself making a fortune.

In honour of the staff and company of the Ambigu, the authors of the play ended by giving a ball at the Elysée Montmartre, which, by the way, figured in Zola's story; and Mr. George Moore, the well-known author of "A Mummer's Wife" and "Esther Waters," has related that his first meeting with Zola — of whom he became for several years the chief English supporter — occurred at this particular entertainment.[3] Mr. Moore — who had then only produced his "Flowers of Passion," and was therefore known in Parisian literary and art circles as a young poet — attended the ball dressed as a Parisian workman, and was engaged to dance with Gervaise. He had no opportunity for conversation when Manet introduced him to Zola, but he called at Médan a few weeks afterwards, and a close friendship sprang up between him and the author of "L'Assommoir." Each, however, was possessed of strong personal convictions, and, as years went by, Zola's life and work gradually took a course of which Mr. Moore did not approve, perhaps because — as admitted by himself — he failed to understand it.

---

[1] See Sala's "Paris herself Again," London, Vizetelly & Co., 1879 *et seq.*

[2] It will be remembered that Charles Reade prepared an English version entitled "Drink."

[3] "My Impressions of Zola," by George Moore, in "The English Illustrated Magazine," February, 1894.

The law of the world is evolution. *L'homme absurde est celui qui ne change jamais;* and Zola, amid the very triumph of "L'Assommoir," at the very moment when he was expounding the principles of Naturalism in the "Viestnik Yevropi" and "Le Voltaire" (which he joined when "Le Bien Public" ceased publication), was already, and quite unconsciously, perhaps, undergoing a change. He was in some degree carried away by the sudden accession of ample means after years of poverty and years of battle. In the long run he showed himself superior to fortune, whether it were favourable or adverse, but he found its first smile irresistible, as so often happens with those who have long toiled and suffered and cursed their fate. Briefly, he proved no exception to the general rule; and he was taunted with having failed to depart from it, being candidly told in print that, like Herbert Spencer and Gustave Flaubert, he ought to have been quite content with mere lodging-house surroundings, and that he made a ridiculous use of his comparative wealth.

Most of his money, it may be mentioned, was lavished on his property at Médan, to which he made many additions, building, for instance, a large square tower in which he fitted up a spacious workroom, whose huge window suggested that of a studio. In that room in later years most of his books were written. And as wealth accrued a second large tower was added to the first, followed by some smaller ones flanking the entrance of the property. All this was denounced as bad taste; and unquestionably, from an architectural point of view, Médan, with one bit of building added here and another there, became a strange-looking place. At the same time it remains an interesting memorial of the rise of Zola's fortunes. One knows, for instance, that the first tower was built with money derived from "L'Assommoir," that the second was erected with some of the proceeds of "Nana," that this and that enlargement were paid for by "La Terre" or "La Débâcle." Certainly no common *parvenu* would have left such a tell-tale record. It is doubtful whether he would have been content to dwell during the greater part of the year in an out-of-the way village like Médan; and even had he retained possession of the property he would surely have demolished the original humble little house and have erected some grand Louis Treize château on the site.

But another charge preferred against Zola was that he wasted time and money in collecting works of art and curios — the latter more often than the former. In his novel, "L'Œuvre," he gave an explanation of this which is worth quoting:

> "His [Sandoz's, otherwise Zola's] drawing-room was becoming crowded with old furniture, old tapestry, nick-nacks of all countries and all times — an overflowing torrent of things which had begun at Batignolles with an old pot of Rouen ware, which Henriette [Madame Zola] had given her husband on one of his fête

days. They ran about the curiosity shops together; they felt a joyful passion for buying; and he now satisfied the old longings of his youth, the romanticist aspirations which the first books he had read had engendered. Thus this writer, who was so fiercely modern, lived amid the worm-eaten middle ages which he had dreamt of when he was a lad of fifteen. As an excuse, he laughingly declared that handsome modern furniture cost too much, whereas with old things, even common ones, you immediately obtained some effect and colour. *There was nothing of the collector about him,* his one concern was decoration, broad effects; and to tell the truth, the drawing-room, lighted by two lamps of old Delft ware, derived quite a soft, warm tone from the dull gold of the dalmaticas used for upholstering the seats, the yellowish incrustations of the Italian cabinets and Dutch show-cases, the faded hues of the Oriental door-hangings, the hundred little notes of the ivory, the crockery and the enamel work, pale with age, which showed against the dull red hangings."[1]

No doubt, among the great quantity of tapestry, carved wood, old furniture, pottery, church embroideries, and so forth, which Zola thus gathered together, there were occasionally things which did not suggest the best taste or the greatest accuracy of judgment. But the statement quoted above shows that he disclaimed collecting in the ordinary sense, and made purchases solely for decorative purposes. And, in any case, even if he bought a few things whose only recommendation was their quaintness, or accepted an object as genuine when an expert would have known it to be spurious, his transgressions in those matters were of no importance to the world at large, and one is surprised that some of his "candid friends" should have thought it worth while to expatiate on them.

---

[1] "L'Œuvre," p. 435.

It has been urged, however, that directly money came to Zola, instead of yielding to a desire for comfort, he ought to have devoted himself to travel and study, and particularly have restrained his literary output. He would have derived benefit from foreign travel undoubtedly, but his self-set task of the Rougon-Macquart series long riveted him to France. As for study, he was always studying, books as well as men, and Mr. George Moore's suggestion that he had little acquaintance with the heart of French literature[1] was erroneous, for abundant proof of the contrary will be found in the eight volumes of his collected essays and articles. These also show that he kept abreast of the literature of his time, and all his friends are aware that new books and literary periodicals, to say nothing of a profusion of newspapers, encompassed him during the last twenty years of his life. But, in a large degree, he certainly set the literature of the past behind him, regarding it as being chiefly of historical value. And whether he were right or wrong in that matter, it must be obvious that his attitude was in keeping with his character as an evolutionist. In a word, he was more concerned respecting the future of literature than respecting its antecedents.

But it has been said that a change began to appear in Zola about the time of "L'Assommoir," and the change we more particularly mean is that by which the novelist expanded into a reformer. As scores of his newspaper articles, collected and uncollected, testify, the injustice of the social system had always been manifest to him. With the degradation of many individual lives he was well acquainted. His own rise to affluence made him yet more conscious of the difference between the rich and the poor. His descent into the mire of life, to seek there his Coupeau, his Lantier, and his Gervaise, left on his mind some impress of the horror which he imparted to others. And thus, with him, art no longer remained art for art's sake only, — a broad humanitarianism gradually entered into his literary conceptions.

---

[1] "English Illustrated Magazine," *l. c.*

At the outset the novelist and the reformer were certainly more or less at variance. The *cuisine* of politics still remained distasteful to Zola, and he is often found protesting that he is merely a literary man and does not wish to intervene in passing events. But as the years elapse the reforming instinct becomes more and more powerful, gathers increased strength from such works as "Germinal" and "La Terre," till at last the humanitarian feeling, triumphing over everything else, trampling unrestrained upon all literary canons, finds voice in "Lourdes" and "Paris," "Fécondité" and "Travail," and at a supreme moment impels Zola to champion the chosen victim of Roman Catholic fanaticism and military infallibility.

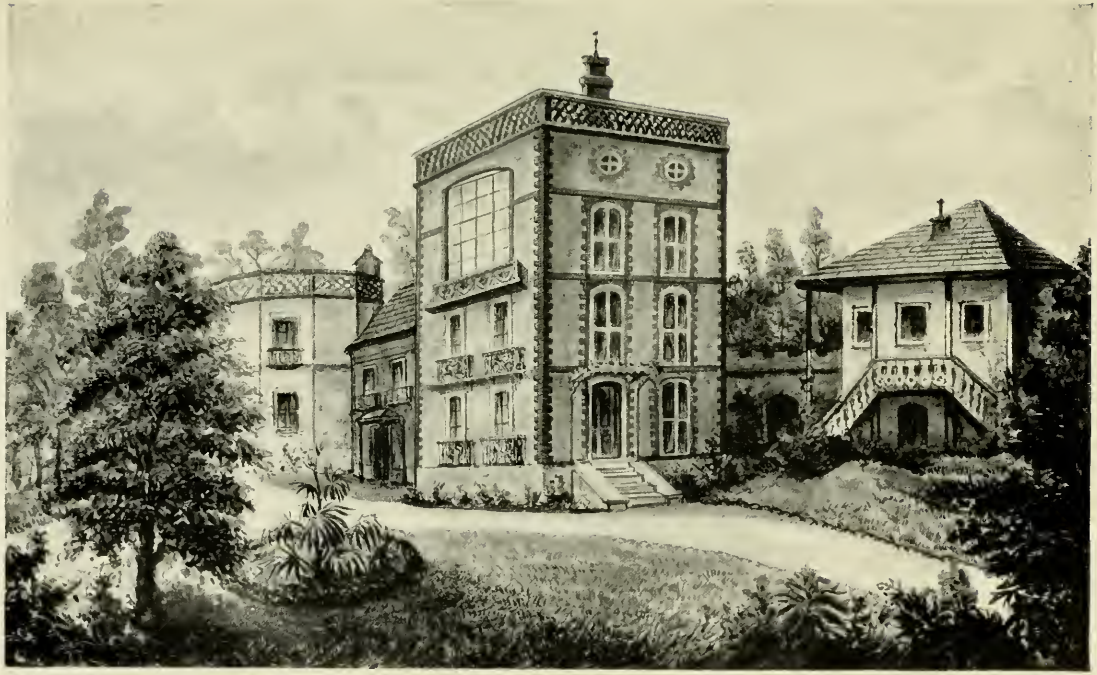
At an early stage of his gradual transformation he is seen defining the novelist as an exponent, an analyst, a dissector of human life. His work is to be accomplished in strict accordance with science, and the methods of the great scientist, Claude Bernard, are held up to him as examples. This idea of "le Roman Expérimental," as Zola finally called the scientific fiction he expounded, had long haunted him; but when he wished to give it really adequate expression he was momentarily at a loss as to where he might find the most forcible and most modern exposition of scientific principles and methods. It was his friend M. Yves

Guyot, a many-sided man, then only a journalist, later a Minister of State, and now eminent as a political economist, who recommended him to study Claude Bernard.[1] On that study Zola based one of the most famous of his essays. Science, which appeals so little to some minds, particularly literary minds of the average calibre, is really the greatest humanitarian agency we possess. The man who experiments, the man who dissects, does not do so for mere pleasure; his aim is the increase and diffusion of knowledge, the benefit of the world, the advantage of his fellowmen. That which is learnt in the laboratory, the workshop, the operating room is put to use in a thousand ways. In physiological and medical science the work may often be very repulsive, yet it reveals the causes of many flaws and ailments, and points to the means of cure. A similar aim became Zola's as he proceeded with his novels. He made it his purpose to inquire into all social sores, all the imperfections and lapses of collective and individual life that seemed to him to require remedying. That everything should be made manifest in order that everything might be healed, such was the motto he adopted.

Yet in the first instance he did not preach, he did not denounce; he contented himself with stating the facts; he confined himself to analysis, dissection, and demonstration, and he used the novel as his vehicle, because the novel alone appealed to the great majority of people to whom it was necessary that the facts should be made patent if any remedy were to be applied.

---

[1] So stated by M. Yves Guyot in conversation with the writer and others in the autumn of 1902. It ought to have been mentioned that it was M. Guyot who engaged Zola as dramatic critic of "Le Bien Public." See *ante*, p. 156.



Camet, del

Zola’s Home at Médan, showing the ‘‘Assommoir’’ & ‘‘Nana’’ Towers

But the prejudiced, the purblind, and the foolish, the hundreds of so-called critics who had glanced at his novels but had never perused a line of the essays in which he enunciated his principles, responded by accusing him of a degraded partiality for filth, of wallowing in mire, because such was his favourite element. The sensation created by "L'Assommoir" had been great, that which attended the production of "Nana" was perhaps greater.

Much of the year 1878 was spent by Zola in making preparations for that book. Incredible as it may seem, his critics have actually reproached him for his previous ignorance of the "successful" Parisian courtesan. His knowledge of her had certainly been limited to her out-door life; like others he had seen her, elbowed her at the theatres, in the Bois, and at other places of public resort. That was all. He therefore applied to friends and acquaintances for information. Edmond de Goncourt, who had repeatedly dined at the table of La Païva[1] before she became the wife of Henckel von Donnersmarck, gave him a variety of information; Ludovic Halévy initiated him into the *demi-*

---

[1] This woman had an extraordinary career. She was of German origin, her real name being Theresa Lachmann, but she was born in Russia, and first married a French tailor of Moscow, named Villoing. After eloping with Herz, the well-known pianist, she entered the Parisian *demi-monde* under the auspices of the notorious Esther Guimond. Finding herself in difficulties she proceeded to London, fascinated and half-ruined a member of an English ducal house, returned to Paris, ruined several French nobles there, and ultimately married Viscount Armijo de Païva of the Portuguese Legation, whom she also ruined and who committed suicide. Though her beauty, which had been great, was then fading, she captivated Count Henckel von Donnersmarck, a connection of the Bismarck family, and he ended by marrying her. She lived in a magnificent mansion in the Champs Elysées adorned by Baudry, Cabanel, Gérôme, and Clésinger; and Girardin, Gautier, About, Ponsard, Augier, Houssaye, and Goncourt were familiars of her drawing-room. She died in 1884 on her husband's estate in Silesia.

mondaine side of theatrical life, to which, given all his intercourse with Hortense Schneider, Zulma Bouffar, and others, he was the most competent of guides; men of fashion, who had wasted their best years and much of their money among the harlots of the Second Empire, told him tales of their experiences; he visited the house of one *belle impure* from basement to attic, and he supped at the house of another. Of the lower-class unfortunate he had, perforce, seen a good deal during his bohemian years in the Quartier Latin, and all observers of women of that category are aware that in most cases, though they may acquire some superficial polish on rising to wealth, their real natures undergo little change.

Zola's enemies naturally imputed the writing of "Nana" to his partiality for vice and scandal; but those who are acquainted with "L'Assommoir" will recognise that, in such a series as "Les Rougon-Macquart," a study of the courtesan was the necessary corollary of the study on drink and the general degradation of the working class. It is from such homes as those of Coupeau and Gervaise that spring nine-tenths of the unhappy creatures so grimly denominated *filles de joie.* Nana's childhood and youth had already been recounted in "L'Assommoir," and it was certain that Zola would not leave her there. How could he picture the degenerescence of a period if he omitted the harlot, who had played — people hardly seem to recognise it nowadays — such a prominent, such a commanding part, during the years when Napoleon III. — dallying himself with La Castiglione, La Bellanger, and a dozen others, while his cousin Prince Napoleon Jérôme kept the notorious Cora Pearl — had transformed the proud city of Paris into the brothel of Europe? Again, scores of Zola's contemporaries, writers of various degrees, by trying to poetise the courtesan, had increased her influence a hundred-fold, and the time had come to check her encroachments by exhibiting her in her true colours, with all her vulgarity, her greed, her degradation, her shamelessness and heartlessness.

In September, 1879, when Zola had written about half of "Nana," he arranged with M. Laffitte, editor of "Le Voltaire," which was then publishing his articles on "scientific fiction," to produce the story in that newspaper; and M. Laffitte at once advertised it in a fashion worthy of Barnum himself. Huge posters appeared on all the walls of Paris, "displayed" announcements invaded the newspapers, sandwich men patrolled the streets, ticket-advertisements were even affixed to the gutta-percha tubes of the pipe-lights in the tobacconists' shops; and, indeed, upon every side one found the imperious injunction: *Read Nana! Nana!! Nana!!!*[1] All this greatly vexed Zola, who had shut himself up at Médan to finish the book, and who did not at all desire to be advertised in such an extravagant fashion. To make matters worse, the serial issue had scarcely commenced (October 16, 1879) when several newspapers began to discuss the story, all the quidnuncs demonstrating by A *plus* B that the opening chapter was not at all such as it ought to be, and that the work was bound to prove a failure. Then, too, letters full of suggestions or criticism or denunciation rained upon Zola at Médan, putting his nerves to the severest test. Nevertheless, he worked on steadily, taking the greatest care over even the most trifling details, employing a friend to obtain precise information on such matters as phaetons and tandems, the decorations of Mabille, the aspect of the rooms on the top-floor of the Grand Hotel, the view from them, and the facial mask of a woman dying (as Nana died) from small-pox.[1]

---

[1] Alexis, *l. c.*, p. 118.

As the publication proceeded in "Le Voltaire" the complaints became more numerous. A good many people professed to be shocked; Gambetta presently complained to the editor that the story was "too strong"; and the editor requested Zola's permission to curtail or omit certain passages. This was accorded, the latter half of the work appearing in "Le Voltaire" in a bowdlerized form. On January 2, 1880, Zola started on the fourteenth and last chapter, and on January 7 he completed it. "Let me tell you a great piece of news," he wrote to a friend that day, "I finished 'Nana' this morning. . . . What relief! Never did any previous work of mine upset me as this has done. At present let it be worth what it may, it has ceased to exist for me. . . . I write to you in the joy of deliverance. My last chapter seems to me to be the most weird and successful thing I have ever written."[2]

---

[1] Mr. R. H. Sherard in his "Émile Zola: a Biographical and Critical Study," London, 1903, prints several of Zola's letters on the above subjects. The following may be given as a specimen: "Médan, September 18, 1879: I have received your book on small-pox. That will evidently suffice for my purpose. I will devise a death mask by comparing the various documents. I am very much tempted to make the disease black pox which, in point of horror, is the strangest. Only I admit that if without taking too much trouble you could manage to see the corpse of a person who had died of that complaint — I say, that is a nice little task! — you would oblige me greatly. . . . In that case mind you supply full details about the state of the eyes, nose and mouth, giving me a precise geographical chart, from which, of course, I should only take what I may need." This suggestion was not acted upon. In describing Nana's death Zola eventually had to rely on the statements he found in medical works.

[2] Sherard, *l. c.*, p. 171.

A few weeks later, that is on February 15, "Nana" appeared in book form, the passages omitted from "Le Voltaire" being reinstated in the text. Large orders having been received from various parts of the world, M. Charpentier had ordered fifty-five thousand copies to be printed; but on the very day of publication he found it necessary to order ten thousand more.[1] In the case of "Nana," as in that of "L'Assommoir," the public gave no heed to the critics, who, of course, raised their customary protests. In certain matters of detail their objections were well founded. Zola had made a few mistakes in dealing with some of the *minutiæ* of theatrical and turf life, and, as Madame Edmond Adam remarked in the "Nouvelle Revue" — and as the author himself subsequently admitted — Nana was shown accomplishing in few years what, in actual life, would have taken a woman much longer to accomplish. That, however, was forced upon Zola by the scheme of his series, the incidents recorded in which had to occur between the years 1852 and 1870.[2] When all is said, taking "Nana" in its *ensemble*, it was certainly the most truthful picture ever traced of the so-called Parisian world of pleasure in Imperial times. Of course the book was denounced as immoral. The Parisian smart set shrieked loudly; many a Boulevardian journalist, whose looseness of life was notorious, perorated in club and café respecting the amazing depravity of that man Zola; and in addition to abusive newspaper articles, there again came scurrilous pamphlets and parodies after the fashion of those which had followed "L'Assommoir."

---

[1] "Nana," Paris, Charpentier, 1880, 18mo, 528 pages; one hundred and sixty-sixth thousand on sale in 1893; one hundred and ninety-eighth thousand in 1903; some special copies on Japan, India, and Dutch papers. Illustrated edition: Marpon and Flammarion, n. d. but 1882, large 8vo titles, 456 pages, with sixty-six wood engravings after Bertall, Gill, Bellenger, Clairin, etc. A hundred copies printed on Dutch paper with impressions of the engravings on India paper, and a special frontispiece showing Nana on a sofa. The ordinary copies of the illustrated edition were priced at 6 francs, but were also sold very largely in fifty-seven parts at 10 centimes. From 1882 to the present time (1903) over two hundred thousand copies of the illustrated edition have been sold, bringing the total sales of the work (apart from translations) to nearly half a million copies.

[2] See his explanations on this subject in the preface to E. A. Vizetelly's translation of "Le Docteur Pascal," London, Chatto, 1893 *et seq.*

Zola did not reply immediately; but in 1881, when "Nana" had been dramatised, he contributed a few articles to "Le Figaro" on the subject, besides penning a longer paper on "Immorality in Literature," in which he contended that writers of the Idealist school made vice all roses and rapture, whereas the Naturalists made it repulsive. And he was absolutely convinced, he said, that far more heads had been turned, more young men and girls and women led into dangerous courses, by the works of George Sand, Octave Feuillet, Barbey d'Aurévilly, and even Sir Walter Scott, than by the writings of Flaubert, Balzac, Goncourt, and their followers. As for "Nana," said he, it had given offence because it was a true picture, and therefore spoilt the pleasure of the *viveurs* of Paris, who wished to see everything *couleur de rose* beneath a cloud of *poudre-de-riz*.[1]

In 1880, after the publication of "Nana," Zola wrote several short stories. He had published one, "Naïs Micoulin," in a paper called "La Réforme," towards the close of the previous year; and he now gave "La Fête à Coqueville," "L'Inondation," and "Nantas," to "Le Voltaire," to which journal he also contributed some papers on Théophile Gautier, Ste.-Beuve, and others. But a better known publication in which he was interested appeared during the spring. This was the collection of stories called "Les Soirées de Médan,"[1] to which Zola contributed his well-known tale, "L'Attaque du Moulin," which he had previously published in Russia, and which subsequently provided his friend M. Alfred Bruneau with the subject for an opera. Nowadays in its form as a story "L'Attaque du Moulin" has become a reading book in many French and English schools.

---

[1] "Documents Littéraires," p. 375 *et seq.*

As mentioned in a previous chapter, five younger writers, Alexis, Huysmans, Maupassant, Céard, and Hennique, had gathered round Zola, whose literary views they largely shared.[2] Each of them contributed to the so-called "Soirées de Médan," the preface of which stated: "The following stories have been published previously, some in France, others abroad. It has seemed to us that they have sprung from one and the same idea, that their philosophy is identical. We therefore unite them. We are prepared for all the attacks, the bad faith, and the ignorance of which current criticism has already given us so many examples. Our only concern has been to affirm publicly what are really our friendships and our literary tendencies."

At that time, of the six writers responsible for that preface, only Zola had acquired a position; and such a solemn manifesto seemed therefore somewhat presumptuous, the more particularly as, apart from Zola's tale, the only other of real merit in the book was Guy de Maupassant's. For him, so far as the book-reading public was concerned, "Les Soirées de Médan" proved virtually a *début,* whose promise his subsequent writings confirmed. "Boule de Suif," as he called his contribution to the volume, was the tale of a woman, who is shown sacrificing herself, during the Franco-German War, for the convenience and safety of others. They entreat her in that sense, and yet as soon as they are free they spurn her and abandon her to her shame. This woman, like the other people figuring in the story, actually lived,[1] and indeed it would be difficult to find half a dozen really imaginary characters in all Guy de Maupassant's tales. He carried the passion for personalities even farther than Alphonse Daudet did, and there exists, it is said, a set of his writings, on the margins of which he himself wrote the real names of almost every person and locality he ever described. One may conclude that he was perhaps a more genuine Naturalist than Zola, his work being invariably based on "human documents," the fruit of personal observation and experience. This occasionally tended to make his art unduly photographic; but, at the same time, as is well known, his literary style was excellent, and from that standpoint some of his tales are undoubtedly masterpieces of their kind.

---

[1] The first edition (Charpentier, 18mo, 301 pages) was accompanied by ten copies on India and fifty on Dutch paper. There was a special edition in 1890, small 8vo, 307 pages, six portraits etched by Fernand Desmoulin, and six illustrations etched by Muller after Jeanniot. Of this edition one copy was printed on Japan paper with three sets of the etchings; one copy on parchment with two sets of the etchings before lettering; and sixteen on Dutch paper with two sets of the etchings, both before and after lettering.

[2] See *ante*, p. 162.

---

[1] Her real name was Adrienne Legay and she really bore the nickname of "Ball of Tallow." She was of peasant extraction, and was born near Fécamp about 1850. Coming to Rouen, where she became the mistress of a cavalry officer and later of a manufacturer of cotton goods, she at one time kept a small hosiery shop, at another a little café. Finally, after making a precarious living as a fortune-teller, she committed suicide at Rouen in August, 1892. She often declared to the literary men who became acquainted with her that she herself gave Maupassant the idea of his story by telling him an adventure of hers, which, however, had not resulted in the manner he described; and she accused him of having pilloried her in a spirit of revenge for having rejected his suit when he was a penniless hobbledehoy at Rouen.

Unfortunately there was insanity in Guy de Maupassant's family, which was old, of good nobility, but limited means. His father, who had been a painter and had played a prominent part in founding a famous Paris art club, had died in a lunatic asylum. The same fate befel his brother; and, according to some accounts, there was insanity on his mother's side also. In any case, from birth onward a dreadful threat hung over Guy de Maupassant, and the life he led from the time he became his own master was not calculated to ward off the danger. He was a man of the strongest passions, a *beau male*, as the French say; and women began the work which absinthe, opium, and morphia completed. At last, still young in years, at the height of his celebrity, he attempted his life, and was only saved from immediate death to languish awhile in an asylum. One cannot think of him, as of some others, without feeling the force of the contention that very little may at times separate genius from insanity.

Immediately "Les Soirées de Médan" appeared, its contributors were chaffed by the newspapers for attributing undue importance to themselves; and Zola was said to be bringing up these young men in leading-strings for the express advancement of his literary theories. A rather acrimonious controversy ensued, Zola repeatedly declaring that he was not, and did not wish to be, a *chef d'école*, and that those with whom he was associated were his friends and not his disciples. But the discussion suddenly ceased, for the literary world of Paris was startled by the unexpected news of Gustave Flaubert's death at Croisset, near Rouen.

During the previous Easter (March, 1880) the veteran author had received Daudet, Zola, Charpentier, Maupassant, and Goncourt at his country place, and Goncourt has related in his "Journal" how thoroughly they enjoyed Flaubert's paternal hospitality, and how on Easter Monday they lingered in Rouen, ferreting among old curiosity shops, playing billiards, and planning a *diner fin* at the principal hotel. When, however, they wished to give their order, consternation fell on them: it was a holiday; all the provision shops were closed, the hotel larder was virtually empty, and the *diner fin* resolved itself into veal cutlets and cheese. That amusing experience was still in Zola's mind when, on May 8, he received at Médan this laconic telegram from Maupassant: "Flaubert dead." Dead — and they had left him so gay and so full of life and health! Zola was profoundly attached to Flaubert, and the tidings quite unmanned him. On May 11 he started for Le Croisset and attended the funeral, of which he has left a deeply interesting account, instinct with all the grief of one who has lost a near and dear friend. In these later years various English versions of some of Flaubert's books have been published, but, so far as the present writer is aware, no editor or publisher has thought of utilising Zola's account of Flaubert as an introduction to a translation. Yet that account is perhaps Zola's best work as an essayist, — full of interest, and much of it admirable in tone and style. One may say, too, that anybody wishing to form an accurate opinion of Gustave Flaubert, both as a writer and as a man, cannot do better than read the hundred pages which Zola devoted to him in his "Romanciers Naturalistes."

But another blow fell on Zola in 1880. In October his mother, long ailing and crippled, passed away at Médan. Various painful circumstances attended the death and the funeral; and Goncourt, writing at the end of the year, pictures Zola as having become a perfect hypochondriac in consequence of this loss. He complained of all sorts of ailments, kidney disease and palpitations of the heart, talked of his own death as being near at hand, and feared that he would not have time to finish anything. Briefly, "he was filling the world with his name, his books were selling by the hundred thousand, no other author, perhaps, had ever created such a stir, and yet he felt profoundly miserable."[1]

About the time when his mother died his articles on "scientific fiction," previously issued, some in "Le Voltaire" and others in the "Viestnik Yevropi," were republished in a volume.[2] One of them had greatly offended Laffitte, the editor of "Le Voltaire," who being mixed up in sundry transactions with some of Gambetta's satellites, resented Zola's caustic allusions to them. Nor was an article on some scandal occasioned by the erotic publications of the "Gil Blas" to his liking. He ended by accusing his contributor of defending obscenity and of treating public men with disrespect. A rupture followed. Zola castigated Laffitte in a foot-note to one of the incriminated articles when he reissued them in a book, and turned to "Le Figaro," which gave him all liberty to defend his ideas. He then began a series of articles, republished in a volume the following year under the title of "Une Campagne."[3]

---

[1] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. VI, p. 127.

[2] "Le Roman Expérimental," Paris, Charpentier, 1880, 18mo, vii–416 pages. This volume, in which the whole theory of Naturalistic fiction is expounded, has been reprinted several times with the mention: "Nouvelle Édition."

[3] "Une Campagne," Paris, Charpentier, 1881, 18mo, x–408 pages.

They dealt with a great variety of subjects, political, literary, and social, and show how wide was the interest which Zola took in the affairs of his time. One of them on Victor Hugo and his poem "L'Ane" caused a sensation, for most people deemed it positive sacrilege to attack the greatest literary glory of the age. The uproar was even heard across the channel, and Mr. Swinburne, who admired "L'Ane," and held Zola to be mere "stench," manifested particular indignation. But a quarter of a century has elapsed since then, and it is a question whether many people would be inclined nowadays to regard "L'Ane" as a great poem. In a sense, Zola's attack was unkind, but it was essentially one on fetish worship, on the habit of lavishing indiscriminate praise on everything, good, bad, or indifferent, that might come from the pen of a writer of eminence. Let us remember that there has never yet been a poet of whom one might say his every line is a masterpiece. Homer nodded, so did Hugo, and so has even Mr. Swinburne himself.

Some of Zola's articles in "Le Figaro" dealt with his own work; others with that of his friends Goncourt, Huysmans, Maupassant, and Daudet; but several were political — attacks on Gambetta and so forth, written in the same spirit which had prompted the article on Hugo. Gambetta, as will be remembered, had now (1880–1881) reached the crisis of his life. The Tunisian debt scandal, the frauds of the Union Générale, — a Catholic bank established with the papal blessing for the purpose of wresting financial power from the Jews, — were associated by some folk with his "great ministry." Besides, his proposals for changing the electoral system, his patronage of reactionary generals, able men, it must be admitted, divided the Republican party. He was accused, too, of acting as a drag, of checking the progress of the democracy, of sacrificing principles to personal interest. He had certainly become somewhat sluggish so far as measures were concerned, and, as Zola put it, he seemingly imagined that orations sufficed for everything. "It was not his actions which gave him his position, but his phrases," Zola wrote. "He has always defeated his adversaries by phrases. He has acquired authority by phrases. . . . If there be any question of taking a forward step he makes a speech. If there be a question of warding off a danger he makes a speech. If there be a question of making his authority felt he again makes a speech. He speechifies without a break, and all over the country."[1]

Later, after Gambetta had come into conflict with his constituents, and the elections of 1881 had shown that the so-called Opportunist cause was seriously compromised, Zola returned to the attack, and one may the more appropriately quote a passage from his article called "Drunken Slaves," as it shows how deftly he profited by an opportunity to defend his literary cause while dealing with a political subject. Before giving that passage, however, it is as well to explain that Gambetta, having encountered a hostile reception at an electoral meeting at Charonne, had completely lost his head. Threatening his adversaries (all working-men) with his walking stick he shouted to them furiously: "Silence, you squallers! silence, you brawlers! . . . You pack of drunken slaves, I will track you to your lairs!" And as if this were not sufficient, his newspaper, "La République Française," added in its next issue such choice epithets as: "Cowards, incapables, prostitutes' bullies, jail-birds, and pot-house loafers." All who might not vote for the great man having been thus stigmatised in advance, it might be assumed when Gambetta, in lieu of his usual great majority, polled only 9,404 votes against 8,799, that about half the electorate was given over to drink, crime, and depravity. Taking this as his text Zola wrote as follows:

---

[1] "Une Campagne," Gambetta, p. 105.

> "The figures on either side are nearly equal, so it is established that at Belleville and Charonne one of every two citizens is never sober. . . . Yes, one half of the masses is composed of brawlers, drunkards, and cowards. M. Gambetta said to them: 'We will see which side is the most numerous'; and they have seen. Of 20,000 citizens 10,000 are drunken slaves . . . 10,000 drunken slaves! The figures make me thoughtful. I remember a novelist who wrote a novel called 'L'Assommoir.' It was a conscientious study of the ravages caused by drink among the working classes of Paris. It was instinct with pity and affection, it solicited mercy for womanhood and for childhood, it showed labour vanquished by sloth and alcohol, it begged for air and light and instruction for the unhappy poor, more social comfort, and less political agitation. Now do you know in what fashion M. Gambetta's friends and newspapers greeted that book? They denounced it as an evil action, a crime. They dragged its author through the mire. . . . Pamphlets did not suffice them, they even delivered lectures, and declared publicly that the author had insulted the people of Paris. They would have hanged him had they been able, in the hope that by so doing they might secure a hundred additional votes at the next elections. Yes, it was so. M. Gambetta's friends and newspapers were then all tenderness for the people. M. Gambetta had invariably secured a large majority at Belleville, and it was consequently impossible that there could be a single tippler among those who dwelt on the sacred mount of the democracy . . . What! a paltry novelist

dared to insinuate that there were dram-shops in the *faubourgs!* The man lied, he insulted M. Gambetta's electors, he could only be a scoundrel. To the cess-pool with him, sweep him away! And all the hounds who were waiting for their master to toss them a bone, all the curs who lived on the crumbs from his table, executed his orders, and sprang, snarling, after the unlucky writer. . . . Ah! I laugh. There suddenly comes a change. . . . The masses, whose evolution never ceases, grow tired of M. Gambetta, accuse him of acting contrary to his programme, of seeking personal enjoyment, of waxing fat in the seat of power and keeping none of his most express promises. . . . And on the day when they hoot him, he is maddened by rage, he forgets that the Rancs and the Floquets have vouched for the temperance of Belleville, and he furiously calls the electors drunken slaves! All brawlers, and all sots!

"Now the author of 'L'Assommoir' had not insulted them. He had never called them squallers or cowards, nor, in particular, had he threatened to track them to their lairs. . . . He was less severe: he pitied them. . . . Leave the literary men in peace then, you political gentlemen, you majestic humbugs, who prate with your tongues in your cheeks, and yet wish to be respected! You can see now how shameful it was to heap insults upon a peaceable writer whose one concern was truth, to hunt him down as if he had been a common malefactor, and this solely by way of electoral advertisement; for directly an obstacle is offered to your own ambition, you rush upon the masses to suppress them, whereas the novelist only spoke of curing them. . . . And you, good people, go and vote for all those humbugs who, so long as you work for their benefit, promise to give you jam! You are great, you are noble, and if a passer-by ventures to advise you to work, those humbugs declare it to be sacrilege, and hasten to immolate him before you, to prove to you that you are indeed perfect. But on the day when you refuse to be duped any longer, when you claim the jam they have so often promised, they turn round on you and insult you, call you drunken slaves, and threaten to have you shot down in your lairs! With a fine show of indignation they formerly denied that My-Boots existed; but, all at once, if they are to be credited, it is actually

My-Boots who reigns as King over a Belleville of brawlers and toss-pots." [1]

The foregoing extracts will give some idea of the passionate vigour which Zola occasionally displayed in controversy. To some readers it may seem beside the mark to dwell at length upon a series of newspaper articles like "Une Campagne," but it is in such writings, more than in the majority of his novels, that one finds the real Zola with his superb confidence in himself, his disregard for conventionalities, and his glowing passion for truth and rectitude. His pen was certainly not always so virulent as in the passages one has quoted, but it was almost invariably incisive, and when treating sociological subjects it showed that, however impersonal his novels might be, his heart really bled at the thought of the degradation he described in them. Looking back, it seems extraordinary that for so many years his critics, and particularly foreign ones, and among them notably those of England and America, should have persisted in the ridiculous assertion that if he pictured filth, it was solely in order to pander to readers of gross instincts. His articles, his declarations, his explanations, were all before the world, and easily accessible; but through carelessness, or laziness, or ignorance, the great majority of English and American critics never turned to them, and the legend of the filthy Zola, whose favourite habitat was the muck heap or the cesspool, spread upon all sides.

The humanitarian purpose, the reforming instinct that is to be found in Zola, appears clearly in some of the articles contained in "Une Campagne." The meaning of "L'Assommoir" is indicated in the passages that have been quoted here, and light is thrown on some of his subsequent works, such as "Nana" and "Pot-Bouille," by the papers entitled: "The Harlot on the Stage," "How the Girls grow up," "Adultery in the Middle Classes," "Virtuous Women," and "Divorce and Literature." Some of those articles were written apropos of the performance of "Nana," which was dramatised by M. Busnach in conjunction with Zola (whose name, however, did not appear on the bills) and produced at the Ambigu on January 29, 1881. Zola tells us there had been no little trouble with the theatrical censors, who, when the play was submitted to them in manuscript, deleted the word "night" wherever it appeared, and wished to strike out in its entirety the chief scene between Nana and Count Muffat — a scene of temptation such as had been given in a score of earlier plays. What particularly alarmed the censors, according to Zola, was Nana's consent, the "yes" with which the scene ended; they wished to substitute some such answer as, "Well, we will see," which would have been ridiculous.

---

[1] "Une Campagne." Abbreviated from the article entitled "Esclaves Ivres," p. 362 *et seq.* Readers of "L'Assommoir" will remember that the bibulous "My-Boots," referred to above, is one of its principal characters.

Edmond de Goncourt says that the audience at the first performance was on the whole favourably inclined; but Zola points out that it was composed of two distinct elements, on one hand the literary men, friendly or inimical, who came to judge the play, and on the other the faded harlots of Paris, the white-gloved bullies, the men of pleasure and finance who had sunk to the streets, in fact all the characters that figured in the play itself, multiplied fifty times over. And these looked and listened with pale faces, sneering at the representation of their own depravity. However, there was considerable applause when the play ended; and Zola and Busnach received the congratulations of their friends in the manager's private room, where Madame Zola, suddenly turning towards her husband, scolded him for having failed to order any supper to celebrate the happy event. "My dear," Zola answered, remembering, no doubt, the supper intended to celebrate the success of "Le Bouton de Rose," which had become a fiasco, "I 'm superstitious, you know, and I 'm convinced that if I had ordered a supper the piece would have failed."[1]

It was attacked by the critics on the morrow, some complaining that they had been imposed upon, that they had been led to expect a masterpiece of revolutionary audacity, and that only a repugnant play, base and crapulous in its fidelity to life, had been offered them. Others, of course, protested against the exhibition of the harlot on the stage; and to them Zola responded that he was by no means the first to set her there. He recalled Victor Hugo, with "Marion Delorme" and "La Esmeralda"; Dumas *fils*, with "La Dame aux Camélias"; Barrière and Thiboust with "Les Filles de Marbre," and Émile Augier with "Le Mariage d'Olympe." They and their imitators had lied, however; they had pictured harlots such as had never existed since the world was world, and his sin was that he had done his best to portray such a creature as she really was. "Besides," he added, "it seems to me cowardice to shun certain problems under the pretext that they disturb one. That is turning egotism and hypocrisy into a system. Let be, people say, let us cover up vice and celebrate virtue even when it is not to be found. . . . I have a different idea of morality. It is not served by rhetorical declamation but by an accurate knowledge of facts. And therein lies that Naturalism which provokes so much laughter, and at which so much mud is foolishly thrown."

---

[1] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. VI, p. 134.

The actress who played the *rôle* of Nana was Léontine Massin. Fair, with a coaxing glance, a sensual mouth and nose, and a superb figure, she quite looked the part, in spite of her forty years; and, truth to tell, she had in some measure lived it. She had also long been known to the stage in minor *rôles;* and now, yielding to her natural instincts, she sprang to the front, impersonating Nana with a power and a truth which stirred one deeply. All Paris flocked to see her. But she was not content with acting. She became Nana in reality, and her chosen victim was the manager of the Ambigu, Henri Chabrillat, a bright, talented, gallant man, who had shown his bravery in the Franco-German War, and his literary skill in half a dozen novels. Unhappily he was carried away by a mad infatuation for the temptress; as fast as money poured into his coffers he squandered it upon her; embarrassment followed, and when the end came he put a pistol to his head. Never, perhaps, has the truth of a play, and the disregard of the passions for the most obvious lessons, been exemplified more terribly. Amid the uproar which ensued La Massin vanished, Paris for a week remained lost in amazement, and then, as always happens, the tragedy was forgotten.

In that same year, 1881, Zola republished in book form most of the biographical and literary papers which he had written of recent years. "Le Roman Expérimental" had led the way in 1880, and now there came four more volumes: first "Les Romanciers Naturalistes,"[1] a series of papers on Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert, Daudet, and the Goncourts, to which was added the much discussed review of contemporary novelists; secondly, "Documents Littéraires: Études et Portraits,"[2] in which will be found papers on Chateaubriand, Hugo, Musset, Gautier, George Sand, Dumas *fils*, Ste.-Beuve, contemporary poets such as Leconte de Lisle, Baudelaire, Banville, Catulle Mendès, Dierx, Anatole France, Mallarmé, Hérédia, Coppée, Bouchor, Richepin, and Sully-Prudhomme; and critics such as Taine, Pontmartin, Levallois, Babou, Barbey d'Aurévilly, and Sarcey, with some curious notes on Buloz, the founder of the famous "Révue des Deux-Mondes." Next there came "Le Naturalisme au Théâtre," divided into two sections, theory and example; the former including papers on the special gift alleged to be necessary in all writers for the stage, on acting, costumes, scenery, government subventions, etc.; and the latter running through the whole scale of the playwright's art, tragedy, drama, comedy, vaudeville and pantomime, with selections from the many articles which Zola had written as a dramatic critic between 1876 and 1880. Finally there was a fourth volume entitled, "Nos Auteurs Dramatiques," in which plays by Hugo, Augier, Dumas *fils*, Sardou, Labiche, Halévy, Gondinet, Pailleron, D'Ennery, Barrière, Feuillet, and others, were analysed and discussed.[3]

---

[1] Charpentier, 18mo, 338 pages. Ten copies on Dutch paper. The contents first appeared partly in the "Viestnik Yevropi," partly in "Le Voltaire."

[2] Charpentier, 18mo, 427 pages. Ten copies on Dutch paper. The contents of this volume also appeared originally in the "Viestnik Yevropi."

[3] Both volumes mentioned above were issued by Charpentier uniform with the previous one. Dumas *fils*, whom Zola criticised with great severity in

To some of the theories set forth in those four volumes it may be necessary to refer when we survey Zola's work generally. The books have been mentioned here because they were issued at the period we have now reached, and because it is advisable that the reader should realise how energetic, how zealous Zola always was, how great was his versatility, and how strenuous his life. This man who subsequently preached the gospel of work had practised it unremittingly since the day he emerged from Bohemia. Fortune might frown or success might come, he did not alter in his industrious habits. In spite of every rebuff, every attack, he continued striving undauntedly, even as his father had striven before him. He was a living example of the axiom that life is a battle. He fought for his ideas, his principles, without a pause, until his last hour.

"Nos Auteurs Dramatiques," responded by assailing Zola's dramatic theories, in his preface to "L'Étrangère." See "Théâtre Complet d'Al. Dumas *fils*." Paris, Calmann Lévy, 1879.

VIII

THE BATTLE CONTINUED

1881–1887

"La Joie de Vivre" begun and put aside — "Pot-Bouille" — The outlay at Médan — Zola's first franc — His hypochondria and dread of death — His opinion of drawing-rooms — His idea of writing a book which would never end — "Au Bonheur des Dames" begun — Zola falls seriously ill — He recovers and finishes "Au Bonheur des Dames" — "Le Capitaine Burle" — The decline of Zola's sales — He is still stage-struck — Alphonse Daudet and the French Academy — His popularity and friendship with Zola — "La Joie de Vivre" finished — "Pot-Bouille" as a play — First ideas of "La Terre" — "Germinal" — Zola among the pitmen — A charge of plagiarism — The reception of "Germinal" — "L'Œuvre" — Zola on politicians and young writers — Death of Victor Hugo — Zola's telegram to George Hugo — "Germinal" forbidden as a play — The purport of "Germinal" — Zola, humanitarianism, and artistry — Publication of "L'Œuvre" — Zola prepares "La Terre" — A glance at the French peasantry — Sketch of "La Terre" by Zola — His tour of investigation — Various plays: "Le Ventre de Paris," "Renée," Jacques Damour," "Tout pour l'Honneur," — The "Manifesto of the Five" against Zola and "La Terre" — Zola's opinion of it — Daudet and Goncourt unconnected with it — Prolonged denunciation of Zola — M. Lockroy to the rescue — How Zola became a knight of the Legion of Honour.

In the year 1881, besides launching the critical volumes enumerated in the last chapter, Zola carried his Rougon-Macquart series a step further. Early in the spring he planned "La Joie de Vivre," a tale of pain and suffering, containing numerous autobiographical passages, descriptive of some of his feelings and peculiarities. But while he was preparing his notes the recollection of his mother's recent death constantly pursued him, and he felt it would be impossible for him at that time to write such a book as he wished. So, after a few attempts, he decided to postpone this particular work. It will be remembered that he had first intended to make the Rougon-Macquart series one of eight volumes only. Next, he had decided on twelve, to which figure he had adhered until the time of "L'Assommoir." But plenty of characters for additional volumes figured on the leaves of the genealogical tree which he had long since prepared,[1] and now that success had come he felt that he might extend his series. "Nana" was its ninth volume, and he resolved to add eleven more. "La Joie de Vivre" having been put aside, he was thinking of what subject he might take in hand when, in the course of his "Figaro" campaign, he had occasion to write an article on "Adultery in the Middle Class." The idea that this was the great evil preying on the *bourgeoisie* seized hold of him, and he began to prepare the book which he called "Pot-Bouille," a title which might be Englished, perhaps, as "The Stockpot," and which signifies every-day *cuisine* and by extension every-day life. Some of the incidents that he wove into this work had come under his personal observation, others were suggested by friends, some of whom also collected special information which he needed, Huysmans, for instance, supplying notes about the church of St. Roch, and Céard inquiring into diocesan architects, government clerks, judges, and others, their earnings, their duties, their pensions, and so forth.[2]

Begun at Médan, continued at Grandcamp on the Norman coast, whither Zola betook himself during the summer, and eventually finished at Médan in the autumn, "Pot-Bouille" first appeared, somewhat bowdlerised, in "Le Gaulois," which paid the author thirty thousand francs[1] for the serial rights. But even Zola's best friends did not receive the work very favourably. In writing it he had made a trial of his own scientific formula, keeping his descriptions as short as possible, dividing the narrative into acts, as it were, like a play, curbing his fancy throughout, allowing no exuberance of style; and he was afterwards amazed to find so many cavillers. "It is the clearest and most condensed of my novels," he wrote to a friend early in 1882.[2] Nevertheless, this time the public seemed to share the opinion of the critics. The sale of "Pot-Bouille" in volume form[3] was much smaller than that of "L'Assommoir" and "Nana," a circumstance which is worthy of note, for Zola's adversaries had argued that if "Nana" had sold so largely it was solely on account of all the depravity depicted in its pages. But here was a book which, in that respect, actually surpassed "Nana," and yet it had nothing like the same sale. It has been suggested by way of explanation that middle-class people were the chief purchasers of Zola's works, and that while they appreciated his delineation of depravity among others, they were offended by his description of it among themselves. In that respect "Pot-Bouille" certainly brought Zola some worry; for as a gentleman of the law declared he recognised himself in a certain character, legal proceedings supervened, and Zola had to make certain alterations in his work.

---

[1] He had shown it at a very early stage to his friends Huysmans and Céard, and the former has recorded how greatly they were amazed by it. ("Le Matin," September 30, 1902.)

[2] Sherard (*l. c.*, 188 *et seq*) gives a variety of information on these points taken from Zola's letters to a friend whose name does not appear.

---

[1] £1,200 = about $6,000.

[2] Sherard, *l. c.*, p. 193.

[3] "Pot-Bouille," Paris, Charpentier, 1882, 18mo, 499 pages; some copies on Dutch, India, and Japanese paper; eighty-second thousand in 1893, ninety-fifth thousand in 1903. Illustrated edition: Marpon and Flammarion, 1883, large 8vo, titles, 452 pages. Fifty-seven wood-engravings after Bellanger and Kauffmann. Sold also in parts at 10 centimes. One hundred special copies on Dutch paper with the engravings on India paper.

Shortly before the publication of "Pot-Bouille," Edmond de Goncourt had suggested to Zola that their monthly dinners, abandoned since the death of Flaubert, might be resumed, and Zola, like Tourgeneff and Alphonse Daudet, immediately assented. Goncourt, by the way, would seem to have then seen little of Zola for some time past. He mentions that he read the first chapters of his novel, "La Faustin," to the Zolas, the Daudets, Hérédia, Charpentier, and the "young men of Médan," on which occasion he was amazed to find that the passages based on study and research produced no effect on his little audience, whereas the chapters in which he had relied on his imagination carried them away. And he was particularly amused when Zola declared that a certain imaginary Greek, called Athaasiadas, must really have been drawn from the life.[1] A little later, when Goncourt, the Daudets, and Charpentier visited Zola at Médan, they found that he had already spent two hundred thousand francs on his house there, besides buying one of the islands on the Seine near the property and building a chalet on it. In talking of those matters, Zola evinced a superb contempt for money. It was impossible for him to hoard, he said; he remembered the first franc-piece given him when he was a very little boy. He had immediately gone to buy a purse, which had cost him nineteen *sous*, in such wise that he had only one *sou* left to put in it.[2]

---

[1] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. VI, p. 140.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

When the monthly "Diner des Auteurs Sifflés" was resumed in March, 1882, the two stock subjects of conversation, says Goncourt, were death and love. And the hypochondriasis from which Zola was suffering, which had declared itself at the time of his mother's death and had recently compelled him to put "La Joie de Vivre" aside, now became painfully manifest. An unreasoning fear of death, and, it would seem, even of suffering pursued him. Somewhat later (in 1885) and apropos of the terrible, lingering death of Jules Vallès, who in the midst of a friendly conversation would suddenly blanch with dread as if he could see death approaching him, Zola said to Goncourt: "Ah! to be struck down suddenly, as Flaubert was, that is the death one should desire."[1] This wish, we know, was ultimately granted. But in 1882, according to Goncourt, Zola, who believed that he had a complaint of the heart, was tortured by the idea of "a sudden and violent death which would fall upon him before he had finished his work." Again, we know that such a fate did ultimately befall him; but Goncourt tells us that, at the period we have now reached, the thought of it haunted him to such a degree that "since the death of his mother, whose coffin it had been necessary to bring down by way of the window (there being only a narrow, winding staircase at Médan, in spite of all its embellishments), he had never since been able to set eyes on that window without wondering who would soon be lowered from it, himself or his wife. 'Yes,' he said, 'since that day the thought of death is always lurking in our minds. We now invariably keep a light burning in our bedroom, and very often, when I look at my wife before she falls asleep, I feel that she is thinking of it even as I am. And we remain like that, a certain feeling of delicacy preventing us from making any allusion to what we are both thinking of. Oh! the thought is terrible! There are nights when I suddenly spring out of bed on both feet, and remain for a moment in a state of indescribable fright.'"[1]

---

[1] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. VII, p. 11.

And this, it will be observed, was the leading French novelist of the time, a man in the prime of life, whose name was already known all over the world, who had risen from poverty to affluence, and who, if attacked by some, was also envied by thousands!

A few days after telling his friends how he suffered at the thought of death, Zola gave a *diner fin* at his Paris residence. There was great display; and Goncourt tells us that the *menu* included *potage au blé vert*, reindeers' tongues, mullet *à la Provençale*, and truffled guineafowl.[2] But Zola was still out of sorts. Success had no charms for him, he said, and, in his estimation, literature was a mere dog's trade. Less than a month afterwards, on April 6, the day when "Pot-Bouille' was published, and when the first orders seemed to indicate a large demand for the book, Goncourt met Zola again and found him as morose as ever. The truth would appear to be that he resented some of the criticisms already levelled at his work. He kept on growling, and finally exclaimed that it was not so necessary to have had actual experience of things as some folk imagined; and as for incessant reading, well, he had not the time for it. "Society?" he added, "why, what does a drawing-room reveal of life? It shows one nothing at all! I have five and twenty men now working at Médan who teach me a hundred times more than any drawing-room would teach me."

---

[1] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. VI, p. 186 (March 6, 1882).

[2] A somewhat similar dinner is described in "L'Œuvre."

Again on April 18, when lunching with Madame Zola at Goncourt's, he was full of spleen, complaining of a score of worries, and notably of some plot, engineered by sundry members of the French Academy, to stop the circulation of "Pot-Bouille." He had now already begun to write the next instalment of the Rougon-Macquarts, that is, "Au Bonheur des Dames," but according to his statements to Goncourt, this story really had no great attraction for him. He dreamt of undertaking some work which he would never be able to finish, he said, something which would give him occupation, and at the same time enable him to retire from the every-day battle without saying so — for instance, some colossal and endless history of French literature. In July that same year — 1882 — when Goncourt, Daudet, and Charpentier were at Médan, Zola reiterated his dissatisfaction with "Au Bonheur des Dames." His previous success had spoilt his life, he declared; he would never again be able to write a book which would make as much stir as "L'Assommoir" or command such a multitude of readers as "Nana."[1]

Writing to a friend a fortnight previously, he had evinced less pessimism. Indeed, though he referred to "Au Bonheur des Dames" as a *tour de force* which would end by disgusting people "with the complicated state of French literature," he had expressed himself as being generally satisfied, and as enjoying the solitude in which he found himself at Médan, for it lent him great lucidity of mind. But it is certain that his nerves were overstrained, and that

---

[1] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. VI, p. 209.

Goncourt's opinion of his condition was accurate; for a little later, in August, he collapsed and had to cease work entirely. His friends were very much alarmed, for his weakness became extreme and a fatal issue seemed possible. But his constitution slowly triumphed over that nervous prostration, and at the end of October, one finds him writing to a friend: "I am a little better. I have been able to get back to work. Nevertheless I am not at all strong. I fancy that something very grave brushed past me but spared me. . . . How heavy is the pen! For the next two or three years I ought to lead the life of an idiot [i. e. a purely animal life without mental exertion] in order to recover my strength. I have become such a coward that the prospect of having to finish my book terrifies me."[1]

But he compelled himself to resume it, for as is well known he regarded work as the panacea for all evils, physical as well as mental. Thus, by the middle of November, he was able to announce that he had taken up his task again with a sufficiency of courage and intellectual health. It was about this time that M. Charpentier published a volume of his short stories, previously contributed to various periodicals.[2] Moreover "Au Bonheur des Dames" was now appearing serially in the "Gil Blas," which paid twenty thousand francs for the right of publication, or two-thirds of the amount which it had given for "Pot-Bouille." "Au Bonheur des Dames" had naturally necessitated considerable preliminary study and investigation in order that a truthful picture might be presented of the trade of a great city, as exemplified by one of those huge drapery establishments, — the Louvre, the Bon Marché, and the Printemps. Some such leviathan, devouring all the small fry around it and teeming with restless life, was depicted in Zola's pages, which introduced the reader to a world of counter-jumpers beneath whose superficial gloss lay much rank brutishness. And the subject also embraced the hard, the often cruel lot of the girls employed in such places, the ambition and commercial daring of the master, and the ways of all the customers, not forgetting the kleptomaniacs. But though the book was full of interest of a particular kind and deserved the attention of all thinking people, it was perhaps scarcely one to fascinate the great majority of readers. Zola finished it at the end of January, 1883, and in March it was published by M. Charpentier.[1] Most of the newspapers dealt with it sharply; and Schérer, the Protestant critic of "Le Temps," still smarting from the attacks which Zola had made upon the French Protestants, their alleged self-righteousness and narrow bigotry, during his "Figaro" campaign, revengefully described the book as "the attempt of an illiterate individual to lower literature to his own level."[1] The general public did not take very kindly to the work. With "Pot-Bouille" there had at least been a moment when a very large sale had seemed probable, but the demand for "Au Bonheur des Dames" was distinctly moderate, and the wiseacres of the bookselling world opined that Zola, after going up like a rocket, might presently come down like a stick. It is true that the sudden and melodramatic death of Gambetta a short time previously (December 31, 1882) had left the French political world in some confusion; and it is known that the bookselling trade invariably suffers when there is any political unrest. Yet the conditions of the time did not sufficiently explain the drop in the demand for Zola's writings.

---

[1] Sherard, *l. c.*, p. 196.

[2] "Le Capitaine Burle," Paris, Charpentier, 18mo; title-pages bear the date 1883, but the book really appeared late in 1882. Besides the story which gave the volume its title, the following figured in it: "Comment on meurt," "Pour une Nuit d'Amour," "Le Fête à Coqueville," "L'Inondation." "Le Capitaine Burle" first appeared in "La Vie Moderne," February, 1881; and the others in "Le Voltaire," 1880. Of the volume twenty-five copies were printed on India, and fifty on Dutch paper. Marpon and Flammarion added "Le Capitaine Burle" to their illustrated edition of "Thérèse Raquin"; and under various titles the other stories figure in their "Collection des Auteurs célèbres."

---

[1] "Au Bonheur des Dames," Paris, Charpentier, 1883, 18mo, 525 pages. Some copies on Japanese and some on Dutch paper. Fifty-ninth thousand reached in 1893; seventy-fifth thousand in 1903. This would seem to have been the first of Zola's works of which a translation appeared in England. This translation was made by Mr. Frank Turner, subsequently secretary to General Boulanger; it was first issued in a weekly periodical, which the present writer believes to have been "The London Reader," and was afterwards published in book form by Tinsley Brothers. Vizetelly & Co. acquired the copyright and ultimately sold it to E. A. Vizetelly, who transferred it to Hutchinson & Co.

Goncourt, who met him a short time after the publication of "Au Bonheur des Dames," found him lugubrious. "The big sales are all over," said he, in much the same tone as a Trappist might have ejaculated the customary greeting, "Brother, one must die." Nevertheless, though he had several excellent subjects in his mind, — books which under favourable circumstances might well have compelled a renewal of public attention, — he deliberately postponed them, and turned to a work which he must have known would appeal to only a small audience, that study of suffering, egotism, and sacrifice which he called satirically "La Joie de Vivre," and which he had put aside in 1881.

After all, in his estimation apparently, it mattered little what book he took in hand, for as he remarked to Goncourt at the Comédie Française on the night of the revival of

---

[1] Schérer's "Études sur la Littérature Contemporaine," Vol. VII, p. 240.

Victor Hugo's "Le Roi s'amuse" (November 23, 1882), novels were always the same thing over and over again; and it would only be possible to take an interest in the writing of them if one could invent a new form. Personally his great desire was an opportunity to produce a play, one really all his own. In a word he was as stage-struck as ever, and it seemed unlikely that he would feel content until he had given the world an acknowledged dramatic masterpiece. That comparative disregard for the work for which one is best fitted, that craving to excel in something else, and to be praised for it, has appeared in many men, in various degrees and ways. There was Thackeray, who always longed to see his drawings commended; there was Ingres, who courted more applause for his proficiency as a violinist than for his gifts as a painter.

At the opening of the Salon of 1883, Zola lunched with Daudet and Goncourt; and Daudet unbosoming himself, as was often his wont, solicited the advice of his friends as to whether he should offer himself as a candidate for the French Academy. Both Zola and Goncourt urged him to do so, and there was no reason why they should have acted otherwise, for he had many chances in his favour. He occupied a high position as a novelist, and though nowadays no thinking critic can place him in the same rank as Zola, he was at that time far more popular, for if, here and there, he had lampooned one or another individual in his books, he had never given anything like the offence which Zola had given in many directions.

It may be said, perhaps, that in 1883 Alphonse Daudet had reached the height of his reputation. In any case his best work was already done. His novel, "Le Nabab," published in 1878, had been followed the next year by "Les Rois en Exil," and in 1880 by "Numa Roumestan," which would seem to mark the apogee of his career, for a decline was already observable in "L'Évangéliste," published in 1882, and although "Sapho," issued two years later, sold prodigiously, it was not really a great book in the opinion of the present writer, who, cast young into the vortex of Paris, knows something of the existence depicted in Daudet's pages, and has always held that picture to be artificial, untrue to nature in many essential respects, and absolutely deficient in depth. Indeed "Sapho" is a mere skimming of the surface; it never probes. But when all is said, Daudet could be an admirable story-teller when he chose, and the very gifts, which on one hand led to some adverse criticism, — his veneer of poetry, his sentimentality, his inclination to moralise, — won him favour far and wide among people of average intellects.

As was suggested earlier in these pages, Daudet brought a feminine talent into competition with the masculine talent of Zola. Each had his champions in the Parisian world of those days, and nothing would have given some folk greater pleasure than a fierce battle for supremacy between the two men who had become the most widely read novelists of their time. But as a matter of fact they were the best of friends. One has only to glance at Zola's collected essays to see how he praised some of Daudet's writings; while on consulting the pages of Goncourt's "Journal" one will find the two rivals constantly together, dining and lunching and making excursions. Daudet frequently went to Médan, where he boated on the Seine, singing gaily while he rowed, for his health was still good, his spirits were still those of the joyous South, all brightness and geniality, which often helped to dispel his friend's hypochondria. That he was worthy of a place in the French Academy goes without saying, and it was only natural that he should have thought of offering himself as a candidate and have solicited his friends' advice. But, as will be remembered, his views on the subject changed entirely; he allowed it to be known that he regarded the Academy as beneath his notice, and then, in a contradictory spirit, went out of his way to lampoon it in a third-rate book, "L'Immortel." As for Zola, in 1883 there could be no question of an Academical seat for him. He was still in the midst of his battle, with his work only half done.

His novel "La Joie de Vivre," begun at Médan, was written chiefly amid the wild, primitive surroundings of the Anse de Benodet, a creek on the rocky coast of Finistère; but the scene of the book was laid on the Norman shore, between St. Aubin and Grandcamp, where Zola had stayed in previous years. In Lazare Chanteau, the "hero" of his story, he depicted much of his own hypochondria, at which he had already glanced in a tale called "La Mort d'Olivier Bécaille." Lazare's fear of death, his petty superstitions, his irresolution, were all based on Zola's personal experience. So gray a work, which only the devotion and self-sacrifice of Pauline, the heroine, occasionally brightens, could not attract the mass of the reading public. It was published first by the "Gil Blas," which again paid twenty thousand francs for the serial rights; but when it appeared as a volume its sales were small.[1] In fact, from the standpoint of circulation, Zola now relapsed into the position he had occupied before "L'Assommoir."

---

[1] "La Joie de Vivre," Paris, Charpentier, 18mo, 451 pages; some early copies dated 1883, others 1884, when (February) it would appear to have been

But he had made a fresh effort as a playwright, having prepared a dramatic version of "Pot-Bouille," in conjunction with M. Busnach. This, which was produced at the Ambigu Theatre on December 13, 1883, proved less successful than its forerunners, "L'Assommoir" and "Nana," and Zola, in a grumpish mood, decided to remain at "the mill," that is, write another novel. This time, however, he hesitated awhile as to his subject. Among those he had selected for consideration was the railway world, but he was still at a loss how he might work it into a novel. It would be better to turn to the peasantry, to whom he must certainly devote a book; and so, after telling Goncourt that his next novel would be called "La Terre," and that in order to obtain the requisite local colour he would have to spend at least a month on a farm in La Beauce, he asked his friend if it would be possible to procure him a letter of recommendation from some large landowner to one of his farmers, who might be willing to give a lodging to a lady in poor health and in need of country air. The lady in question — Madame Zola — would naturally be accompanied by her husband, and, added Zola, a double-bedded room with whitewashed walls would be ample accommodation, though it must be arranged that he and his wife should take their meals with the farmer and his family, for otherwise he would learn virtually nothing.[1] He realised, apparently, that folks unbutton themselves

---

really published. Some copies were on Japan, India, and Dutch paper. Forty-fourth thousand in 1893 on completion of the Rougon-Macquart series; fifty-fourth thousand in 1903.

[1] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. VI, p. 288 (January 16, 1884).

(in the figurative sense) more readily at meal-time than at any other.

Goncourt was unable to help his friend in this matter, at all events immediately; so Zola turned to another subject which he mentioned on the same occasion, that of a strike in a mining district, such as was in progress among the pitmen of northern France at that very moment. Forthwith he started for the scene of the trouble. "At Valenciennes since Saturday, among the strikers, who are remarkably calm," he wrote in February, 1884. "A splendid country as a scene for my book." This time his subject fairly carried him away. "He spent," says Mr. Sherard, "the best part of six months in travelling about, note-book in hand, through the various mining districts of the north of France and of Belgium, interviewing miners, exploring mines from pit-mouth to lowest depths, attending political meetings among the miners, studying various types of Socialist lecturers, drinking horrible beer and still more horrible brandy in the forlorn *cabarets* of the *corons* [miners' villages], interrogating miners' wives, and wandering about the fields in the neighbourhood of these *corons* to watch the lads and lassies taking their poor pastimes when the day's drudgery was over."[1]

Some eight or nine years subsequently, Mr. Sherard, on visiting the Borinage, as the coal district round Mons is called, fell in with an old *porion* or "viewer" who had acted as one of Zola's guides, and who pronounced him to have been the most inquisitive gentleman he had ever met. Never had he known anybody who asked more questions, said he, unless, indeed, it were an investigating magistrate. Mr. Sherard mentions also that "Germinal" — for that was the book which proceeded from Zola's sojourn among the pitmen — was known in every mining village which he visited. There was not a *coron* where at least one well-thumbed copy of the work could not be found: a proof of the appreciation in which it was held by the toilers on whose behalf it had been written.

---

[1] Sherard, *l. c.*, p. 203.

The preliminary study which "Germinal" necessitated, the long sojourn among new and strange scenes, the strong interest, the compassion roused by all Zola saw and heard, most certainly proved very beneficial to him, reinvigorating him, checking his hypochondriacal tendency, diverting his mind from self, renewing and enlarging his ideas. Thus he was again in possession of physical and mental strength when he began the actual writing of the book. Like his more recent novels it was published *en feuilleton* by the "Gil Blas";[1] and an English version, prepared by Mr. Albert Vandam, appeared in a London weekly newspaper, "The People."[2]

While the serial issue was in progress Zola was once again accused of plagiarism. This time he was said to have borrowed the idea of "Germinal" from a story called "Le

---

[1] About this time, that is late in 1884, there appeared another volume of Zola's short stories: "Naïs Micoulin," Paris, Charpentier, 18mo, 384 pages; twenty-five copies on India, one hundred on Dutch paper. Besides "Naïs" the volume contained: "Nantas," "La Mort d'Olivier Bécaille," "Madame Neigeon," "Les Coquillages de M. Chabre," and "Jacques Damour." All these tales will also be found in Marpon and Flammarion's popular "Collection des Auteurs célèbres."

[2] Under date November 20, 1884, Zola sold all his rights in "Germinal" for Great Britain to Mr. W. T. Madge, manager of "The People." Vizetelly & Co. acquired book rights from the latter and published a fuller translation. Their rights were subsequently purchased by E. A. Vizetelly and sold by him to Chatto and Windus.

Grisou" ("Firedamp"), by M. Maurice Talmeyre — a story which likewise dealt with the coalpits of northern France, and which when published a few years previously had attracted some attention, being full of interest and written with literary ability. But the idea that Zola had stolen his idea of "Germinal" from it was ridiculous. It had been pointed out long since by Alexis that he proposed to add a second volume on the masses to the study he had made of them in "L'Assommoir," intending on the second occasion to deal more particularly with their social and political aspirations. That intention was partially carried into effect in "Germinal," and the idea of laying the scene of his story in the "black country" of northern France was a sudden inspiration which came to Zola when he found it difficult to proceed immediately with his proposed work on some of the French peasantry — an inspiration which was not derived from M. Talmeyre's book at all, but from the circumstance that some thousands of pitmen were on strike at that very time.

Surely no author can claim a monopoly of any subject or any locality. One writer, for instance, may lay a scene in Regent Street; another is equally entitled to do so; and in the result there may well be some resemblance between their descriptions of the thoroughfare. Moreover, in giving an account of any form of life, all writers are confronted by the same essential facts. They may regard them, interpret them, differently, but each must take them into account. Thus if somewhat similar scenes and corresponding facts figure occasionally in "Le Grisou" and "Germinal" it does not follow that the second is stolen from the first. But Zola, unfortunately, was a much-hated man, and the flimsiest peg was good enough for his enemies. As a matter of fact, with respect to "Germinal," he gave nearly six months to personal study of his subject on the spot, and though he derived a few incidents, as he was well entitled to do, from officially recorded instances of the horrors and dangers of the pitman's life,[1] his work well deserved to be regarded not only as an original one but even as a *livre vecu.* When "Germinal" appeared as a volume there was a large demand for it, though its circulation did not approach that of "L'Assommoir" or "Nana." This has surprised several writers on Zola, who hold "Germinal" to be his masterpiece; but it has already been pointed out in these pages that his sales had been declining for some time past, books like "Pot-Bouille" having angered many of his readers. It was hardly to be expected that he would regain all his lost ground at one leap, and under the circumstances the reception given to "Germinal" was distinctly cheering. Moreover, whereas there had been no popular illustrated edition of "Au Bonheur des Dames" or "La Joie de Vivre," one of "Germinal" in parts soon made its appearance, and sold very widely, in such wise that the full extent of the book's circulation cannot be gauged by M. Charpentier's printings.[2]

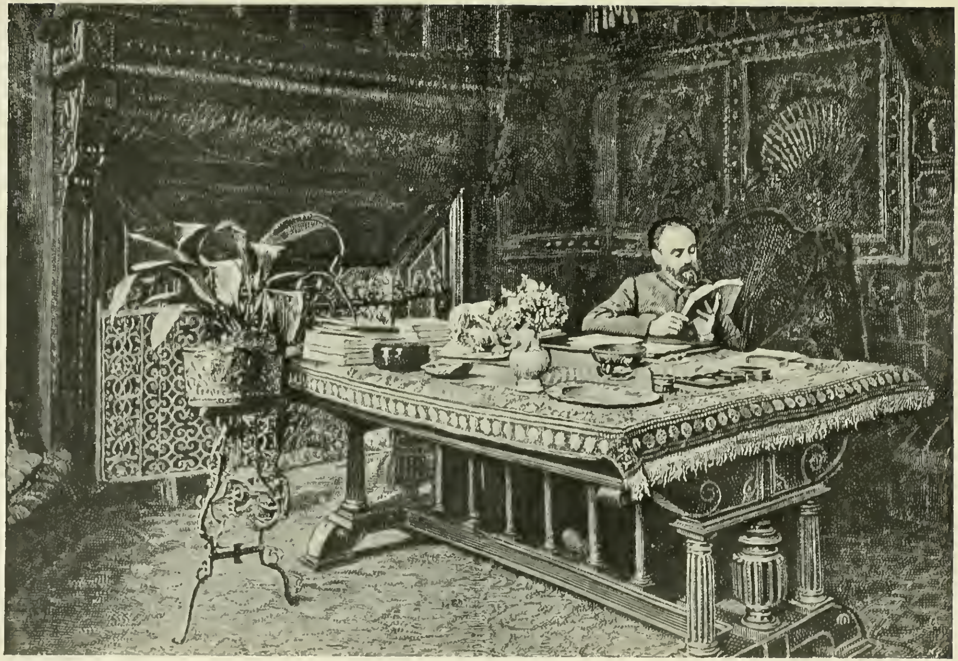
---

[1] For instance, the horrible experiences of Étienne Lantier in the Voreux pit towards the close of the book were based on those of a miner walled up in a Lyons pit in 1854, and on those of a pitman of the Gard, described by M. Parran, an engineer, in the "Bulletin de la Société de l'Industrie Minérale." That narrative suggested the idea of the floating corpse in the inundated mine.

[2] "Germinal," Paris, Charpentier, 1885, 18mo, 581 pages. Eighty-eighth thousand in 1893; one hundred and tenth thousand in 1903. Some copies on Japanese, Dutch, and India papers. Illustrated edition: Paris, Librairie Illustrée, n. d., quarto, titles, five hundred pages; wood-engravings after Férat; one hundred and fifty copies on Dutch paper. This edition like others is now sold by E. Flammarion, successor of Marpon and Flammarion, Rue Racine, Paris.

The next work which Zola took in hand was "L'Œuvre," the most autobiographical of all his novels, and one for which he had no need to collect documents, for his materials were stored away in his memory. A little of his hypochondria had now returned to him, and the writing of "Germinal" having compelled him to give some attention to politics, he did not cease to rail at politicians. At the "Henriette Maréchal" anniversary dinner (May 6, 1885) he made quite a *sortie* against them, declaring that they were the sworn foes of literary men, in which opinion Edmond de Goncourt cordially agreed. About that time "L'Assommoir" was revived as a play, and at a dinner given at the Maison Dorée to celebrate the event, Zola turned from the politicians to rate some of the young authors of the time, their alacrity of speech, and on the other hand their unwillingness to take the trouble of writing, unless they were positively assured of publication. One of these young men, said Zola, would expound an idea that had come to him, depict in glowing terms all the interest which such or such a book would have, and then conclude coldly: "Ah! if a publisher would only order it of me!" For young men of that stamp there was no question of striving. They would work to order or not at all. Thus literature was becoming a mere commercial pursuit.

On May 22, 1885, France lost her great poet, Victor Hugo. He had been sinking for some time; nevertheless the news that he was really dead quite startled Paris. During his last illness he had declined the ministrations of "any priest of any religion," and the announcement that he would be buried without rites or prayers angered the Church party exceedingly, and led to unseemly scenes in the Chamber of



Zola in his Study

Deputies when it was proposed that the Pantheon should be restored to its former destination as the resting-place of the great men of France, and that Hugo's remains should be laid in it. This proposal having been shelved by the Chamber, the popular indignation became so great that President Grévy virtually took the law into his own hands, and issued a decree in accordance with public opinion. The obsequies became a great anticlerical demonstration. Of course, for years past, many free-thinkers had been buried without the celebration of religious rites; but there had been only a few great secular public funerals, such as that of Félicien David, the composer, in 1876, later that of M. Hérold, Prefect of the Seine, and, later still, that of Gambetta. The *enterrement civil* of Victor Hugo marked another step in the same direction and it impressed thousands. More, even, than any of its forerunners, it set an example largely followed in later years.

When Zola heard of the death of Hugo he felt deeply stirred. He remembered the days of long ago, the happy days of Provence when he had learnt by heart page after page of the poet's writings. He had then drunk deeply of Hugo's sonorous rhetoric, and he had not ceased to admire his genius. The virtual failure of "Le Roi s'amuse" when it was revived in 1882 had pleased him from the Naturalist standpoint; yet he had not concealed his opinion that many passages of the play deserved applause, and in fact he had applauded them. "Why not, indeed?" he had ejaculated, turning to Edmond de Goncourt who had accompanied him to the Théâtre Français. And whatever criticism Zola had levelled at the productions of Hugo's declining years, whatever reservations he might make respecting even some of the poet's prime, he knew that this man had been a Master, the most powerful that his age had produced in France. So Zola immediately despatched the following telegram to M. George Hugo, the poet's young grandson:

> You will learn, perhaps, some day, Monsieur, that even with respect to Victor Hugo, I claimed the rights of criticism. And this is why, amid the frightful grief that has befallen you, I desire to tell you that every heart has broken with yours.
>
> Victor Hugo was my youth. I remember what I owe him. No discussion is possible on such a day as this; all hands must unite, all the writers of France must rise to do honour to a Master, and affirm the absolute triumph of literary genius.
>
> Pray believe, Monsieur, in my deep and dolorous sympathy,
>
> ÉMILE ZOLA.[1]
>
> PARIS, May 22, 1885.

Besides writing his novel "L'Œuvre" that year, Zola helped M. Busnach to adapt "Germinal" for the stage; but when the play was ready in the autumn, the censorship forbade its performance on the ground that it would excite revolutionary passions. Zola's indignation boiled over at this rebuff, and with the approval of Alphonse Daudet and Edmond de Goncourt, whom he consulted, he issued a protest in "Le Figaro," trouncing M. René Goblet, the responsible Minister, a fussy little advocate who played the part of a Radical when it suited his purposes, but who was really a Philistine *dans l'âme.* However, the protest had no effect, nor had an offer to allow all reasonable alterations in the play for the sake of M. Busnach, whose interests were chiefly at stake; and it was only in the spring of 1888, when other ministers were in office, that "Germinal" was at last produced at the Théâtre du Châtelet. It may be convenient to mention here that for some years subsequent to the publication of "Germinal" as a novel there was never a strike in France without some foolish and prejudiced journalists casting the blame on Zola and his book. When in 1887 Décazeville became the scene of some terrible disturbances, Zola was charged in many directions — even in the Chamber of Deputies by some of its reactionary members — with the responsibility of those misfortunes. He disdained to reply to such ridiculous accusations; but it so happened that a few months previously (December 27, 1886) when authorising "Le Petit Rouennais" to publish "Germinal" serially, he had written the following prefatory note, in which he explained the book's real purport, which of course had never been doubtful for sensible minds:

---

[1] From the original draught in the possession of M. G. Charpentier.

> "'Germinal' is a work of compassion, not a revolutionary work. In writing it my desire was to cry aloud to the happy ones of this world, to those who are the masters: 'Take heed! Look underground, observe all those unhappy beings toiling and suffering there. Perhaps there is still time to avoid a great catastrophe. But hasten to act justly, for, otherwise, the peril is there: the earth will open, and the nations will be swallowed up in one of the most frightful convulsions known to the world's history.'
>
> "I descended into the hell of Labour, and if I concealed nothing, not even the degradation of that sphere, the shameful things engendered by misery and the huddling of human beings together as if they were mere cattle, it was because I wished the picture to be complete, with all its abominations, so as to draw tears from every eye at the spectacle of such a dolorous and pariah-like existence. Those things, no doubt, are not for young girls, but family people should read me. All of you who work, read what I have written,

and when you raise your voices for pity and justice my task will be accomplished.

"Yes, a cry of pity, an appeal for justice, I ask no more. Should the soil still crack, should the disasters predicted convulse the world to-morrow, it will be because my voice will have remained unheard."

Thus, in "Germinal," Zola gave rein to his humanitarian feelings, and in recognition thereof prudes shrieked indignantly: "That man is at it again! What a beast he must be!" And on their side capitalists, battening on the labour of the poor and alarmed for the safety of their pelf, howled in chorus: "This book ought to be suppressed, it certainly must not be allowed as a play. It means revolution, robbery, rascality of every kind."

But Zola, though he suffered secretly, — all unjust attacks brought him the keenest suffering, — hid it, and passed on.

There was a touch of humanitarianism even in his next book, "L'Œuvre," for it set forth many of the evils of bohemian life, and embraced an appeal for woman in the person of the unhappy Christine, its heroine. Critics may shake their heads, indeed some have done so, and say sapiently: "All this was not art." They may laugh, too, at the idea of reforming the world by novels. But even if, judging Zola by some of his books, one may occasionally feel inclined to set no very lofty estimate on his artistry, surely the trend of his works, the knowledge of their aim, the circumstances under which they were written, must increase one's respect for their author as a man. And, after all, what is the mere artist? As often as not he is penned within a fanatical creed, bound to narrow formulas, blind to everything beyond them, full of prejudice, and even more ridiculous at times than the Philistines at whom he rails.

As "L'Œuvre" dealt chiefly with the art-world of Paris at a certain period of the Second Empire, it revived some of the passions which Zola had kindled by his championship of Manet. By certain painters the book was roundly abused when M. Charpentier published it early in 1886,[1] on the completion of the issue in the "Gil Blas." This time the demand was not great, for by its nature "L'Œuvre" appealed more particularly to a limited class of readers. Perhaps its sales would have been even smaller had not Zola woven into his narrative so much interesting information concerning himself in his earlier years.

No sooner was he delivered of this book than he turned to the novel on the French peasantry which had been in his mind at the beginning of 1884. Already at that time he had given it considerable thought, made notes, studied his subject in books and periodicals; and he now took up the work of preparation in real earnest. At the very outset he had decided to lay the scene in or near the great grain-producing region of La Beauce, in some degree because this would enable him to deal, *en passant*, with certain economic questions, such as the importation of American wheat, but more particularly because both his mother and his grandmother, Madame Aubert, had been Beauceronnes, and in his younger days he had often heard them talk of that part of the country, which presents various features of interest.

---

[1] "L'Œuvre," Paris, Charpentier, 1886, 18mo, 491 pages. Some copies on special papers. Fifty-fifth thousand in 1893; sixty-fourth thousand in 1903. Mr. Albert Vandam prepared an English adaptation of this story which was published serially in England, and afterwards acquired by Vizetelly & Co. It formed the basis of their version of the work.

La Beauce proper is certainly flat and monotonous, but its confines are picturesque, and Dourdan, Auneau, Orgères, and other localities are associated historically with the horrible crimes of the desperadoes known as *chauffeurs,* who roamed the region early in the nineteenth century. A strain of brutishness was long to be observed among some of the inhabitants. Withal, they are essentially French, that is of the borders of the Ile de France, for there is no fixed type of French peasant. Those of Provence, Languedoc, Burgundy, Normandy, Brittany, and other parts, all differ from one another in important characteristics. Thus generalisations on the subject of the French peasantry may occasionally become ridiculous.

Nevertheless, at the period selected for Zola's work, that of the Second Empire, a general resemblance was to be found among them in two respects. In the first place their ignorance was very great. The Imperial Government which did a good deal to ameliorate their lot materially, did as little as possible to enlighten and elevate their minds. They were, so to say, the backbone of the *régime,* and their ignorance was its safeguard. At the elections they were led like sheep to the polling places to vote for the official candidates. All that, however, belongs to the past. Many changes have occurred during the last thirty years, and without entering here into the question of the religious and secular schools, it may be said that under the Third Republic more has been done than at any previous time for the education of the peasantry. Some brutishness persists in various regions, but all who remember how widespread was illiteracy before the War of 1870 know that great improvement has been effected.

To-day, however, even as was formerly the case, there is still one trait common to the French peasantry generally. As in other countries there has been, and is still, a great exodus from the rural districts to the towns; but those who remain at home are distinguished by their earth-hunger, their all-consuming passion for the soil. The historical explanation of this is perhaps as follows: For centuries the peasantry possessed little or nothing, and when the Revolution at last placed the land in their hands absolutely, a craving which had descended from generation to generation was satisfied. They seized the land eagerly, they clung to it fiercely, fearful lest it should be taken from them, as, for instance, when the Bourbons returned, and many of the old *noblesse* sought the resumption of their estates. And old-time feelings, the covetous cravings of ancestors, the desperate tenacity of the generation of 1815, have descended to the peasants of to-day, and were perhaps even stronger among those of the Second Empire, with whom Zola proposed to deal in his novel "La Terre."

It was in part on the peasant's brutish ignorance, and more particularly on his earth-hunger, that he resolved to base his book. The following extract from one of his letters[1] will show his intentions:

> "'La Terre' will treat of the French peasant's passion for the soil, his long struggle to acquire possession of it, his crushing labour, his brief joys and his great wretchedness. He will be studied too in connection with religion and politics, his present condition being explained by his past history; even his future will be indicated, that is the part he may possibly play in a Socialist revolution. All that, of course, will lie beneath the drama unfolded in the book, the drama of a father dividing his

---

[1] Zola to Vizetelly & Co., Paris, March 24, 1887.

land among his children before his death, whence slow and abominable martyrdom will ensue, a perfect tragedy setting some sixty characters, an entire village of La Beauce, in motion; without counting a secondary plot, the *passionnel* side of the story, a quarrel between two sisters, separated by the advent of a man, still and ever in connection with a question of land. To sum up, I wish to do for the peasant what I did in 'L'Assommoir' for the Paris workman, that is, recount his history, manners, passions, and sufferings, such as environment and circumstances have fatally made them."

In the spring of 1886 Zola started on a tour of investigation. He already had some personal knowledge of the region where he proposed to lay the scene of his story, having gone there in his mother's time, but that was long before he thought of writing "La Terre." Among the places he now visited was Châteaudun, where one finds him early in May, whence he writes a friend an interesting letter which Mr. Sherard prints, and a portion of which one may venture to quote here:

"I have been here [Châteaudun] since yesterday, and have found the spot I need. It is a little valley, four leagues hence, in the canton of Cloyes, between Le Perche and La Beauce, and on the confines of the latter. I shall introduce a little brook into it, which will flow into the Loir — such a brook, by the way, exists. I shall there have all I require — large farms and small, a central spot, thoroughly French, a typical and very characteristic horizon, gay people speaking *patois* — in short what I always hoped for. . . I shall return to Cloyes to-morrow and shall go thence to visit my valley and my bit of Beauce frontier in detail. For the day after to-morrow I have an appointment with a farmer living three leagues from here, in La Beauce, and shall visit his farm in detail. . . . I remained to-day at Châteaudun to attend a big cattle-market."[1]

---

[1] Sherard, *l. c.*, p. 227.

In June Zola returned to Médan, and throughout that year and indeed until August, 1887, one finds him busy with this book from which he turned only for a short time in February and April to attend to the production, first of a dramatic version of "Le Ventre de Paris,"[1] which had at least a *succès de curiosité,* and secondly of a play called "Renée" — based on "La Curée" — which proved a resounding failure and was attended by an acrimonious controversy in the press. In the opinion of the critics, apparently, Racine's "Phædra" sufficed for all time, and the idea of a modern one in the person of "Renée" was monstrous: thus Zola sinned both against the great classic writer and against modern society.[2]

While he was dividing his attention between those plays and his novel "La Terre," France was becoming more and more absorbed in political questions. General Boulanger, who had been Minister of War in the Freycinet administration of 1886 had lost that position, but his popularity remained extreme, fanned as it was by a large party of malcontents of various political schools. Many were actuated solely by patriotic considerations, for there had been trouble with Germany over an Alsatian frontier incident known historically as the Schnæbelé Affair. Some people who believed the general to be sincerely Republican only wished him to relieve them of certain men of the hour, such as President Grévy, for rumours were already abroad respecting the nefarious practices of the latter's son-in-law, M. Wilson. But others were intent on purposes of their own, the overthrow of the Republic and the establishment of a monarchy or a dictatorship, into which enterprise they hoped to inveigle the popular ex-Minister of War. Briefly, at this time a great crisis was gradually approaching.

---

[1] "Le Ventre de Paris," five acts, by É. Zola and W. Busnach, first performed at the Théâtre de Paris, February 25, 1887. It differed considerably from Zola's novel with the same title. Sarcey slated it in "Le Temps" and Zola answered him in "Le Figaro," March 3, 1887.

[2] "Rénée," five acts, by É. Zola, first performed at the Vaudeville April 16, 1887. One may add that in the latter part of 1887 two plays based on tales by Zola were given in Paris: The first was "Jacques Damour," one act, by Léon Hennique, Odéon, September 22, and the second, "Tout pour l'Honneur," adapted from "Le Capitaine Burle," one act, by Henri Céard, Théâtre Libre, December, 1887; performed also at the Théâtre Molière, Brussels, in 1888.

Nevertheless, though the unrest penetrated to the literary world, the latter did not neglect the subjects which more particularly concerned it, and there was some commotion among men of letters when on August 18 that year (1887) "Le Figaro" published a manifesto directed against Zola's new work, which had been appearing in the "Gil Blas" since May, and the concluding pages of which were at that very moment being written at Médan. This manifesto (which, when one recalls the presumptuous preface to "Les Soirées de Médan," may be regarded as a Roland for an Oliver) was signed by five young writers, Paul Bonnetain, J. H. Rosny, Lucien Descaves, Paul Margueritte, and Gustave Guiches, who, "in the name of their supreme respect for art, protested against a literature devoid of all nobility." The factum was of some length, diffuse, bristling with scientific jargon, and disfigured by a ridiculous attack on the personal appearance of Zola, whose leadership these young men solemnly renounced.

At that time the best known of the five was Paul Bonnetain, a Provençal of Nîmes, and a friend of Alphonse Daudet, who came from the same city. Bonnetain had then published four or five books, the first of which, "Charlot s'amuse," had so out-Zola'd anything written by Zola himself that its author had been prosecuted for it. M. Rosny on his side had at that date written two books, "Nell Horn," a ridiculous story of "English manners," and "Le Bilatéral," a study of Anarchism and Collectivism which showed marked improvement. M. Gustave Guiches was the author of three volumes, none of which had attracted attention; while Lucien Descaves had published four novels, and was gradually emerging from obscurity, though another two years were to elapse before his venturesome book, "Sous-Off," — for which he was tried and acquitted — made his name at all widely known. Finally, M. Paul Margueritte — destined like M. Rosny to acquire a high position in literature, in conjunction, be it said, with his younger brother, Victor — was as yet only known by an estimable book on his father, the gallant general killed at Sedan, and a couple of works of fiction, "Tous Quatre" and "Une Confession posthume." The eldest of the band, Bonnetain, was in his thirtieth year, the others were six or seven and twenty.

A comical feature of the affair was that of these five indignant writers, who so solemnly disowned "the Master of Médan," only one, Bonnetain, was personally known to him. They had met just twice. With the others Zola had no acquaintance at all. This appears clearly from the statements he made to M. Fernand Xau of the "Gil Blas," who, directly the manifesto appeared and Zola's enemies raised a cry of jubilation at the so-called "great Naturalist schism," hurried to Médan to interview the author of "La Terre." A portion of Zola's declarations to M. Xau may well be given here:

"I do not know what is thought in Paris of this protest which has brought me some very kind letters from my *confrères*, but it has stupefied me. I do not know those young men. They do not belong to my *entourage*, they have never sat at my table, they are not my friends. If they are disciples of mine — and remember I do not seek to make disciples — they are so without my knowledge. Why then do they repudiate me? The situation is original. It is as if a woman with whom a man never had any intercourse were to write him: 'I have had quite enough of you, let us separate!' The man would certainly reply to that: 'It's all one to me.' Well, the position is very similar.

"If friends of mine, if Maupassant, Huysmans, and Céard, had addressed me in such language publicly, I should certainly have felt somewhat offended. But this declaration can have no such effect on me. I shall make no answer to it at all. . . . It would be giving importance to a matter which has none. When I am fighting a theatrical battle I write an open letter to Sarcey because Sarcey certainly exercises great authority. In some literary discussions I have written in a similar way to Albert Wolff, because he is an old *chroniqueur* to whom people listen. But whatever may be my feelings towards the five gentlemen who have signed the document we are speaking of, they must excuse me if I don't answer, for I have nothing to say to them. . . . One thing I cannot understand is why these young men should pass themselves off as soldiers of mine deserting my flag. The only one I know a very, very little is Bonnetain, whose 'Opium' I have read, and whose talent I esteem. He once called on me; and when he appeared before the Tribunal of Correctional Police, after 'Charlot s'amuse,' he wrote asking me to let him have a letter to be read in court. I sent him one, but I advised him not to use it, for the judges, I fancy, hold me in slight esteem. Well, I met Bonnetain again at Daudet's, at the 'Sapho' dinner, and that is all! . . . The comical part of the affair is that people used to reproach me with what they called 'my tail.' They were willing to tolerate what I wrote, but they refused to accept the productions of the young men who claimed to be my disciples — though I cried from the house roofs that I had none. 'Cut your tail off!' people repeated. Well, it is cut off at last. It has taken itself off of its own accord, and now, perhaps, folk will be satisfied."[1]

While conversing with M. Xau, Zola mentioned that some of his friends believed the manifesto to be an echo of the opinions of certain persons whom he held in high esteem, both personally and from a literary standpoint; but he had reason to know that the persons in question were really grieved by the factum to which they had given neither inspiration nor assent. The allusion was in part to Alphonse Daudet, by reason of his friendship with Bonnetain, but more particularly to Edmond de Goncourt, as the latter's "Journal" explains. Goncourt's house, his *grenier*, as one said in those days, had become the meeting-place of a number of young authors, who looked up to him much as others had looked up to Flaubert. And Goncourt, on reading the manifesto in "Le Figaro," had immediately exclaimed, "*Diable*, why four of them belong to my *grenier!*"[2] It naturally occurred to him that Zola might think the plot had been hatched there, under his auspices, and he felt extremely annoyed. A journalist who called on him suggested an article showing that he had no responsibility in the matter; but Goncourt declined to hide behind others. If anything had to be said he would say it himself. However, he went to dine at Champrosay with Daudet, and after they had decided that the manifesto was very badly written and outrageously insulting, they communicated privately with Zola, who was thus able to tell M. Xau that whatever might be said elsewhere, he knew that "the certain persons whom he held in high esteem" had nothing to do with the affair.

---

[1] "Gil Blas," August 21, 1887.

[2] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. VII, p. 206.

On the other hand, some minor literary men adhered to the protest, and the incident was so sedulously exaggerated by Zola's enemies that one might have imagined the manifesto had come from novelists of high reputation instead of from beginners, who, with the exception of Bonnetain, had not yet half-won their spurs. The affair has been related in some detail here, first because a kind of legend has gathered round it, a legend repeated in many of the memoirs issued after Zola's death, and secondly because it ultimately had a notable result: the nomination of Zola as a knight of the Legion of Honour.

Before recounting how that occurred it must be mentioned that "La Terre" was published in volume form late in 1887.[1] The attacks made upon it ever since the so-called "Manifesto of the Five" then acquired yet greater intensity, which a little later was checked somewhat by the uproar attending the decorations scandal in which President Grévy's son-in-law was implicated, followed by the President's resignation, the election of Carnot, and the increase of the Boulangist propaganda. However, at every pause in that turmoil the denunciation of Zola began afresh.

It was still going on when M. Edmond Lockroy, who had known the novelist in the old days of "Le Rappel," became

---

[1] "La Terre," Paris, Charpentier, 1887, 18mo, 519 pages. Some copies on Japan, Dutch, and India paper. One hundredth thousand in 1893; one hundred and thirty-fifth thousand in 1903. Illustrated edition: Marpon and Flammarion, n. d., large 8vo, 472 pages; wood-engravings after Duez, Rochegrosse, etc.; one hundred and fifty copies on Dutch paper with the engravings on India paper.

Minister of Public Instruction. Married to Charles Hugo's widow, guardian of the great poet's grandchildren, artist, author, Garibaldian volunteer, politician, deputy, and minister, M. Lockroy was — and is still — a man of very broad views. He had formed a poor opinion of the "Manifesto of the Five" at the time of its appearance, and he was disgusted by the ensuing attacks, which emanated for the most part from the reactionary press. In these circumstances he resolved on a somewhat bold course, that of offering the red ribbon to the much-abused author, as an official recognition of his literary attainments, and as a kind of solatium for the insults heaped upon him.

At the same time M. Lockroy realised that as Zola, angered by the behaviour of Bardoux in 1878, had then declared he would not accept a decoration, it would be advisable to sound him unofficially in the first instance. The minister ended by selecting as his intermediary a lady who knew the novelist well, and she at once repaired to Médan to ascertain his views.[1] At her first words Zola began to protest, reminding her of the public declaration he had formerly made, and adding that if he now accepted the red ribbon he would surely cover himself with ridicule. But the minister's messenger insisted, pointing out, notably, that prejudiced and ignorant people were on all sides accusing him of deliberate immorality, even obscenity, and that his official nomination to the Legion of Honour might act as a check on his insulters and rehabilitate him in the eyes of the vulgar. At last Zola began to waver, and after consulting his wife, who favoured the proposal, he gave his assent to it. At the same time, mindful of M. Bardoux' shilly-shallying, he insisted that he should have a formal promise from the minister immediately. It was given him; and very soon afterwards, the time having come to draw up the list of those who should be decorated on the occasion of the National Fête that year, 1888, M. Lockroy brought Zola's name before the Council of Ministers. Later, the decree having been signed and gazetted, he personally fixed the red ribbon to Zola's buttonhole in the drawing-room of the lady who had acted as intermediary.

---

[1] The story is told on the authority of Madame Charpentier, wife of the publisher, but it is somewhat doubtful whether the lady in question was herself, though she and her husband knew M. Lockroy as well as Zola. If not, the intermediary may have been a lady related to a minister whose energy made him famous during the siege of Paris. There was such a lady who knew Zola well. English and American readers will doubtless regard the whole affair as being "very French."

She, it would appear, was not a little astonished some time afterwards when on receiving a visit from the novelist he told her that he had decided to offer himself as a candidate for the French Academy. And he explained the position thus: "I had the choice of two paths, one leading to the recognition of my readers only, the other leading to official recognition also. I never troubled about the latter, but you turned me into that path, and I am not the man to halt half way on any road. As there is an Academy I shall offer myself as a candidate directly a suitable opportunity occurs. And," he added jocularly, "as there is a Senate also I may even offer myself as a candidate for that as well. Why not? Ste.-Beuve was a senator, and perhaps I myself shall be one."

Neither of those aspirations was realised; and, in later years, even, Zola's decoration of the Legion of Honour was almost taken from him. It had come to him, not as some have said as the result of "Le Rêve," which was not pub-

Photo by Nadar

Émile Zola, 1888-1890

lished till some months afterwards, but as the result of "La Terre." Elsewhere, however, that same book had very different consequences for another man, for it led to proceedings at law which ruined him, cast him into prison, and hastened his death. How that happened the following chapter will tell.

IX

THE BRITISH PHARISEES

1884–1893

First English translations of Zola —Attacks on Zola in England —The Vizetellys, glassmakers and printers — Henry Vizetelly and his career — His publishing business — The six-shilling novel — Ernest Vizetelly's work for Vizetelly & Co. — His acquaintance with Zola — His opinion of the Zola translations — He becomes reader and editor to Vizetelly & Co. — He partially expurgates the English version of "La Terre" — W. T. Stead solicits information from Vizetelly — The sales of the Zola translations — The "National Vigilants" — "The Maiden Tribute" — Publicity *v.* Secrecy — Zola's aim — Mendacity of some English newspapers — Vizetelly's catalogue — Samuel Smith, M. P., and "pernicious literature" — A debate in the House of Commons — More newspaper lies — Vizetelly committed for trial — "The Decameron" prosecuted — The Government takes up the Vizetelly prosecution — Vizetelly's letter to Sir A. K. Stephenson — "Heaven save us from our friends!" — Vizetelly's difficulties — His trial, October, 1888 — Purity of the rural districts of England — The case stopped — Sentence — Vizetelly's undertaking respecting the Zola books — Zola's view of the case — Expurgation and reissue of the translations — Vizetelly again summoned — He assigns his property to his creditors — Mr. George Moore on the "National Vigilants" — Mr. Frank Harris's offer — Ernest Vizetelly and the responsibility of the new trial — Mr. Cock, Q. C. — His notion of duty to a client — The trial, May 30, 1889 — The plea of "guilty" — Vizetelly's collapse — Sir E. Clarke and Ernest Vizetelly — Sentence on Henry Vizetelly — He is sent to the wrong prison — The legerdemain of the Prison Commissioners — A question for the House of Commons — A letter from Mr. Labouchere — A memorial for Henry Vizetelly's release — Robert Buchanan defends him — His last years and death.

The earliest versions of Zola's novels in our language offered for sale in Great Britain were of American origin. Some American translations are ably done — that is well known — but the particular ones here referred to were for the most part ridiculous, full of errors, and so defaced by excisions and alterations as to give no idea of what the books might be like in French. There were translations of much greater merit in Germany, Italy, and Russia; but until a Mr. Turner produced in London a version of "Au Bonheur des Dames,"[1] the English reader, ignorant of French, really had no opportunity of forming any personal opinion of Zola's writings. He had to rest content with the views expressed in various newspapers and periodicals by men who had read Zola in the original. Among those who wrote on him in the English reviews were Mr. Andrew Lang and Mr. Henry James; but most of the articles that appeared were conveniently anonymous, and therefore, perhaps, essentially abusive, as, for instance, an unsigned paper in "Blackwood's Magazine," the writer of which, not content with attacking Zola's books, thought it as well to libel him as a man. At long intervals there appeared some article in his defence, some statement of his principles and his aims, the best of these being another anonymous paper called "The Literary Creed of Émile Zola,"[2] though even this had a foolishly worded "note" attached to it, showing how little Zola was understood by the average English editor. Such, then, was the position: a dozen or more worthless American versions on the market, and frequent attacks in reviews, magazines, and newspapers, when, in 1884, the first English series of Zola translations was begun by a London publisher, Henry Vizetelly, who, assisted by two of his sons, traded as "Vizetelly & Co."

---

[1] See *ante*, p. 214.

[2] The writer has a copy of this article, a very able one, cut from the pages of a review or magazine, which, unfortunately he has been unable to identify.

Before proceeding further the writer desires to enter a plea *pro domo sua.* He, like others, has his weak spot, and the present may be the only opportunity he will ever have of setting forth certain facts concerning his family, which, in spite of considerable association with English journalism and literature, has frequently been described — chiefly in connection with Zola and his writings — as Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Italian, or Jewish. That the Vizetellys are of Italian origin is indisputable, but one may well inquire how long it takes to make a family English? Some are accepted as such after a few years. Surely, then, four centuries ought to suffice.

The forerunners of Henry Vizetelly came from Venice[1] to England in the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth; and until the end of the seventeenth century were concerned in the manufacture of glass. One of them became connected with some works established at Lambeth in or about 1673 by George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham. The first sheets of blown glass for mirrors and coach-windows made in Great Britain came from those works, which Evelyn visited, as mentioned in his "Diary." But in the early part of the eighteenth century the Vizetellys became printers, and the family papers describe them as of "the parish of St. Bride's in the city of London." The Vizetelly, or Vizzetelli, of Elizabethan days having been called James (Jacopo), it became until recent years the family rule that the eldest son of the eldest son should bear that Christian name.

---

[1] Researches made by the late James T. G. Vizetelly, who was long the senior member of the family (1818–1897), traced it back to Ravenna, whence it removed to Venice. Henry Vizetelly, when preparing his autobiography, had no family documents before him and fell into various errors in his account of his forerunners.

Another name, given to daughters, was the Biblical one of Mehetabel, a survival, perhaps, of some family Puritanism in Commonwealth days. But if there were a Puritan, there was certainly no Jewish strain in the family, the men of which in the eighteenth century married girls with good old English names, some of them London born and others coming from counties as far away as Cheshire. Thus, although the Vizetellys seem to have never forgotten their origin and to have cultivated friendship with sundry notable Italians who settled in England, it is certain that, as generation followed generation, English blood predominated in their veins.

The status of the eighteenth-century Vizetellys as printers is difficult to determine. They were apparently in fair circumstances, but the writer knows of no eighteenth-century book bearing their imprint. He believes they were associated in business with others whose names alone appeared. The first found actually trading in his own name was James Henry Vizetelly,[1] born in 1790, and son of James Vizetelly, "printer, of St. Bride's parish and of

---

[1] Even his business, that of Vizetelly, Branston & Co., printers and publishers, was at one time known merely by the name of the "Co.," that is as Whitehead's, though J. H. Vizetelly was managing partner. He had served his apprenticeship with the Coxes, and did not take up his freedom (his father and grandfather had been freemen of the city before him) till September, 1827. He was a man of considerable gifts ; he wrote for several periodicals, produced a variety of verse (privately printed by himself) initiated the famous "Boy's Own Book," as well as "Cruikshank's Comic Almanack" of which he became the "Rigdum Funnidos," and was one of the best amateur actors of his time. He was very intimate with Edmund Kean, whom he greatly resembled in appearance, and it is said that more than once when Kean was hopelessly drunk he took his place on the boards. Such at least was the story often told to the writer by his grandmother (James Henry's widow) and expressly confirmed to him by an old family friend, Mr. Lemprière, son of the Lemprière of the "Classical Dictionary."

Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields." James Henry's eldest son, James Thomas George, was apprenticed to him as a printer; and his second son, Henry Richard, after acquiring a knowledge of the same trade, was placed first with Bonner and afterwards with Orrin Smith, two noted wood-engravers. He proved one of the latter's best pupils, and ultimately joined his brother James in the printing and engraving firm known as Vizetelly Brothers.

While thus engaged, Henry Vizetelly[1] was approached by Mr. Herbert Ingram, a former news-agent of Nottingham, on the subject of founding an illustrated newspaper. The outcome (1842) was "The Illustrated London News," the first journal of its kind in any country. Vizetelly afterwards quarrelled with Ingram, and, in 1843, in conjunction with Mr. Andrew Spottiswoode, started an opposition paper, "The Pictorial Times," to which some notable men, including Douglas Jerrold and Thackeray, contributed. As, however, the printing and engraving business which he carried on with his brother was becoming a large one, Vizetelly eventually severed his connection with journalism for some years, and either with his brother, or later on his own account, produced a large number of illustrated books, which from typographical and other technical standpoints were often among the best of their time. He was also (this may interest American readers) the first to introduce Poe's "Tales" and — through C. H. Clarke — Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," to the English public; and, having virtually discovered Birket Foster, he also did much to popularise Longfellow in England. Perhaps his best work as a wood-engraver was that done for the edition of "Evangeline," illustrated with Foster's designs.

---

[1] He has related the greater part of his career in his "Glances Back through Seventy Years," and an account of it, of some length, will be found in the "Dictionary of National Biography." But for the purpose which the present writer has in view he considers it as well to recapitulate its chief features.

Vizetelly also took a prominent part in the agitation for the repeal of the taxes on knowledge, such as the newspaper stamp and the paper duty, being honorary secretary to the society for the removal of the latter impost; and in 1855, conjointly with David Bogue, the publisher of most of the books he printed, he started "The Illustrated Times," on the staff of which, as had been the case with "The Pictorial Times," there were again many notable writers and artists.[1] This newspaper ran a very successful course for some years, but about 1860 Vizetelly — after losing a large sum over another venture, "The Welcome Guest" — sold his share in the proprietorship to Ingram of "The Illustrated London News." Ultimately, in 1865, he entered into an agreement to represent the last-named journal on the continent of Europe, with headquarters in Paris, to which city he removed with his family. He saw virtually all there was to be seen there during the last years of the Empire, the subsequent siege by the Germans, and, later, the Commune. He afterwards acted for "The Illustrated London News" as a "special" in different parts of Europe, and became British wine juror at various international exhibitions, for he had made a particular study of wines in the regions where they were produced, and wrote on them at length both in "The Pall Mall Gazette" and in a series of popular volumes. Other subjects also attracted his pen; the best of his numerous literary efforts being probably a work on the famous Diamond Necklace scandal, and another on Berlin as it was when Bismarck had constituted the new German Empire.

---

[1] Among others, James Hannay, Edmund Yates, Robert Brough, G. A. Sala, Sutherland Edwards, J. C. Parkinson, Augustus Mayhew, Frederick and James Greenwood, Tom Robertson, John Hollingshead, "Phiz," Birket Foster, Henry Meadows, Gustave Doré, Charles Keene, Edmond Morin, Gustave Janet, the Claxton sisters, Matt. Morgan, etc.

Such, then, was the man who in 1880 joined the ranks of the London publishers. He was at that time sixty years old but still full of energy, and he gave great personal attention to his business, though, as already mentioned, he had the assistance of two sons. He had been twice married, and of a numerous family four sons and a daughter were then living. The sons whom he had with him were the younger ones, Arthur and Frank Vizetelly;[1] their elder brothers, then abroad, being Edward[2] and Ernest, the present writer, who for convenience proposes to refer to himself by his Christian name throughout this particular narrative.

---

[1] Arthur and Frank Horace Vizetelly, both born at Kensington, the former on October 31, 1855, the latter on April 2, 1864. Both educated at Eastbourne and in France. The former has written and edited various English educational works and periodicals. The latter, resident in New York since 1891, has since become supervisor of the editorial work, and secretary of the editorial board of the "Jewish Encyclopædia," and associate editor of the "Standard Dictionary," besides helping to produce several other well-known works of reference. In 1901, the Governor of Bermuda having given him special access to the Boer prisoners, he wrote several papers on their condition. He has also written on Zola in American periodicals.

[2] Edward Henry Vizetelly, born at Chiswick, January 1, 1847, educated at Eastbourne and St. Omer, war and special correspondent, editor of "The Times of Egypt," Cairo, and afterwards on "Le Journal," Paris. He came to London about 1893, worked there as an author and journalist, and translated some of Zola's novels. He died in 1903. He had been orderly officer to General Garibaldi in 1870, and later an officer of Bashi-bazouks under Mouktar Pasha. While in the East he had assumed the pseudonym of "Bertie Clere," by which he was generally known there.

One of the first ventures of the new business, a series of sketches of English society, entitled "The Social Zoo," and published in parts, was badly launched and dropped before completion; but some sections of it, by E. C. Grenville-Murray, attracted great attention and sold widely on being reissued in volume form. Sala's "Paris Herself Again" and other books were also very successful; but when Vizetelly — who by reason of his long residence in Paris took great interest in French literature — produced a series of cheap translations of works of high repute in France — novels and tales by Daudet, Theuriet, About, Malot, Cherbuliez, George Sand, Mérimée, and others — there was little or no demand for them, though a large amount of money was spent in advertisements. Indeed it soon appeared that if French fiction was to be offered to English readers at all it must at least be sensational; and Vizetelly therefore started a cheap series of Gaboriau's detective stories, which found a large and immediate market. The business gradually expanded, and before long, in addition to miscellaneous works by Sala, Grenville-Murray, and others, the firm took up English fiction in a new form.

Mr. George Moore, the novelist, having found the circulating libraries opposed to some of his books, protested vigorously against the three-volume system which placed English fiction at the libraries' mercy. He held that all novels ought to be sold direct to the public, and many other writers agreed with him. Mr. Moore became one of Vizetelly & Co.'s authors, and the firm thereupon put the theory of direct sale to the public into practice. They abandoned the three-volume system altogether, issuing their new novels in one volume only; and it was Henry Vizetelly who fixed the price at six shillings, to be lowered, after the earlier editions, to three shillings and sixpence — those being the figures which still prevail today. When therefore in later years the three-volume novel was finally slain it was somewhat impudent on the part of certain publishers to issue advertisements claiming all the merit of the change; for long before they or others joined the movement, Vizetelly & Co., as their catalogues show, were issuing a whole series of novels at the popular price, and quoting, in cordial approval of their initiative, an extract from an article in "The Saturday Review." Doubtless the one-volume system has not done all that was predicted for it, but it has certainly been an improvement on the old one, and it may be fairly claimed that Mr. George Moore and Henry Vizetelly were its pioneers.

After the establishment of his publishing business, Vizetelly had communicated with his son Ernest,[1] who was then living in Paris and had friends and acquaintances among writers, publishers, and booksellers there. Several suggestions which he made in the course of the next few years were adopted by the firm. However the idea of publishing English translations of Zola's works did not originate with him. As a journalist he had to keep himself informed respecting everything that occurred in Paris;

---

[1] Ernest Alfred Vizetelly, born at Kensington, November 29, 1853. Educated at Eastbourne and at the Lycée Impérial Bonaparte, Paris. Became a war correspondent (youngest on record) in 1870. Was in Paris during part of the siege; passed through the German lines to Versailles; subsequently joined Chanzy's army and described his overthrow at Le Mans and retreat on Laval ("Pall Mall Gazette"). Was in Paris throughout the Commune, and remained on the Continent for many years, chiefly as an English newspaper correspondent, but from time to time co-operated with his father in the latter's studies on wines in France and other countries.

and he was fairly familiar with what had been done, written, and said there over a long term of years, particularly as even in his school-days he had begun to assist his father as a newspaper correspondent. Thus he was already acquainted with the salient features of Zola's career, the novelist's long and arduous battle for mastery. He had not read all the Rougon-Macquart volumes then published, but he had followed the exponent of Naturalism in his various newspaper campaigns, and he had seen most of the plays based on his books. Again, he was the only member of his family who, at that time, had ever met the novelist. Not long after the Franco-German War Zola had been pointed out to him by an artist as "the man who had championed Manet"; and since then Vizetelly had seen and elbowed him on various occasions in places of public resort. But only once had there been any real conversation between them, in the presence of others, at the Théâtre des Folies-Bergère, with which Vizetelly had been for a time connected.[1]

It may be added that Vizetelly's life in France had inclined him to the outspokenness of the French, and that experience had shown him there was much rottenness in Parisian society. Thus he had no personal prejudice against Zola's writings, which contained, he knew, a vast amount of truth. But he also knew, likewise by experience, that whenever any horrible scandal arose in Paris, the English newspapers would only print a small portion of the truth, and he, as a correspondent, was thus often debarred from making a plain statement of facts of general interest, such as sometimes affected the moral status of men of very high position. Moreover, although Vizetelly had left England in his boyhood, and in subsequent years had only now and again spent a few days or weeks there (apart from one sojourn of about twelve months' duration), his own work, and the frequent perusal of English books and publications had kept him to a certain point in touch with his kinsfolk. And, so far as he could judge, English literature, like English journalism, was under the thumb of Mrs. Grundy. He had seen no sign indicating that Naturalism would even secure a hearing in England. When, therefore, in 1884, he suddenly heard that Vizetelly & Co. were about to produce "L'Assommoir" and "Nana" in an English dress, it seemed to him that the firm was taking an audacious course, and he did not hesitate to write and say so. He was answered, that, being resident abroad, he did not fully understand the position; and, as some difficulty had arisen with the translation of "L'Assommoir," he was asked to translate a small portion of it, some chapter towards the end of the book, which he did. That, for the time, was the extent of his share in the Zola translations.

---

[1] "The Lover's Progress," by E. A. Vizetelly, London, Chatto; New York, Brentano, 1901, Book II, Chap. V. In that novel the Folies Bergère is called the "Paradis Parisien," Zola "Rota," and his book "L'Assommoir," "La Matraque."

The idea of publishing those translations originated, then, with Henry Vizetelly, unless, indeed, it was suggested to him by somebody else. In 1885 his son Ernest, on going to London, found the firm doing a large and increasing business. In addition to French and English writers, several Russian authors, Tolstoï, Dostoieffsky, and Lermontoff, — who were followed a little later by Gogol, — had been added to the firm's catalogue. A series of reprints of the old dramatists, the well-known "Mermaid Series," was being projected;[1] and the Zola translations, so far as they then went, were in wide demand. This surprised Ernest Vizetelly, whose anticipations had been so different. But he yielded to evidence, and even began to think that there was at last some prospect of English people dropping the hypocrisy which had clung to them so long and looking unpleasant facts in the face.

He returned to Paris, where he remained till 1887, when various reasons induced him to take up his residence in London. He had married some years previously, and though his wife was French he particularly desired that his children should retain his nationality. Moreover, he now had the offer of a great deal of work from his father, who was projecting various reprints of French eighteenth-century books, as well as expensive and sumptuous editions of "The Heptameron," "The Decameron," and the works of Rabelais. Some thousands of pounds were spent on those undertakings, but only the first-named eventually saw the light.[2] Arriving in London, Ernest Vizetelly became one of the readers and editors of his father's firm; but for one reason or another he still had little to do with the Zola translations. His father contemplating a new edition of the Gramont Memoirs, he revised the translation alleged to have been edited by Sir Walter Scott, and corrected some scores of errors which he found in it. For the rest, his time was largely spent in researches respecting the proposed version of "The Heptameron," of which he was editor.

---

[1] Vizetelly & Co. published the first fifteen volumes of this series, which on the firm going into liquidation was acquired by Mr. Fisher Unwin.

[2] The edition in five volumes with the Freudenberg and Duncker plates, known as that of the "Society of English Bibliophilists," but really issued by Mr. J. C. Nimmo after Vizetelly & Co. had gone into liquidation. Professor Saintsbury wrote for this edition an essay on the French work; but the actual translation of the tales was made by Mr. J. S. Chartres, and the present writer supplied the annotation, the memoir of Queen Margaret, etc.

Meanwhile Vizetelly & Co. were still issuing translations of modern French fiction, and Mr. George Moore, having occasion to go to Paris, spoke on the firm's behalf to Zola respecting "La Terre," which book the novelist was then preparing. An arrangement was made for the sale of the British rights to Vizetelly & Co., who then knew virtually nothing of the work, apart from the fact that it would deal with the French peasantry. Some time afterwards, however, Zola supplied a brief outline of his book in a letter which has been already quoted.[1] Then various delays ensued, several months elapsing before proofs of the earlier chapters were forwarded to Vizetelly & Co. Those proofs were handed to a translator with whom some difficulty arose, in such wise that they were transferred to another, and Ernest Vizetelly was requested to read and check the English proofs, a task which he occasionally undertook in connection with various translations. He was immediately struck by the boldness of Zola's story, which seemed to surpass in outspokenness any of the novelist's previous works. And at the very outset he deemed certain excisions and alterations advisable.

For instance, he found one of the characters, Hyacinthe Fouan, called by the nickname of "Jesus Christ," and afflicted with a nasty infirmity. The nickname did not particularly surprise him, for during the many years he had spent in Paris, he had known more than one young artist cultivating, notably as regards hair and beard, a resemblance to the traditional portraits of the Christ, and going by that nickname both in the studios and the cafés frequented by artists. It seemed to him quite possible that Zola had found it among the peasantry whom he described. But, however that might be, Vizetelly felt that the nickname would give offence to English readers, and so he did not hesitate to expunge it from the proofs submitted to him. He felt also, that although Hyacinthe's infirmity might be true to life, it would also give offence to people who no longer read Sterne, and who knew little or nothing of Rabelais. Accordingly expurgation again ensued.

---

[1] See *ante*, p. 231.

But as successive instalments of the proofs reached Ernest Vizetelly, he found in them a good deal of matter, which in his opinion needed "toning" for the English reader. And he was confronted by a difficulty which pursued him subsequently when he himself translated some of Zola's works; that is to say, the French proofs arrived in sections, the translation was supplied in the same manner, and it was therefore difficult to determine what incidents and facts might be really essential, and how far expurgation might be carried without rendering the book unintelligible. Vizetelly spoke on the matter to one of his brothers, and ultimately he put the work on one side, deciding to wait for its completion. Considerable delay ensued in the publication of the translation. Meantime, towards the close of 1887, the original work appeared in Paris, and was virulently attacked by Zola's enemies; while a rumour, subsequently contradicted, spread to the effect that translations had been stopped in various countries. It therefore seemed advisable to proceed cautiously. Finally the matter was laid before Henry Vizetelly, the proofs of the English version were examined from beginning to end, and in conjunction with his son Ernest, he struck out or modified a very large number of passages, with the result that much of the work had to be reimposed. It may be said, then, that the translation as published was undoubtedly an expurgated one.

About this time, that is in March, 1888, Mr. W. T. Stead, then editor of "The Pall Mall Gazette," who had made himself notorious some time previously by a series of articles on "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," applied to Vizetelly & Co. for some information respecting the sales of the various translations from the French, which the firm was publishing, and which certainly circulated widely and attracted great attention. When the matter was laid before Henry Vizetelly, his son Arthur, who took a large part in the management of the business, suggested that the request should not be entertained, for, said he, it was a very unusual one, and publishers were not in the habit of supplying the public with all sorts of particulars about their affairs. That, at the time in question, was quite true; but Henry Vizetelly, who saw no objection to the request, supplied Mr. Stead with an article in which he gave numerous particulars concerning the sales of his publications. The article, as the sequel showed, was somewhat injudiciously worded in various respects. For instance, it conveyed an impression that — unlike the crude and mangled American versions of Zola which were then in the market — the Vizetelly translations of that author were absolutely unmutilated. As a matter of fact, none of them was an exact replica of the original, all had been expurgated more or less, though care had invariably been taken to preserve the continuity of the narrative. Further, though Vizetelly had very good grounds for asserting that he reckoned it a bad week when the sale of the Zola translations fell below a thousand volumes, this statement, which seemed at first sight to indicate a very large circulation,[1] was again indiscreet, and was eagerly seized hold of and magnified by those who were already lying in wait to destroy him.

Of the inner workings of that conspiracy the writer might perhaps say a good deal; but for the purposes of this narrative, the facts which appeared on the surface are sufficient. A campaign was started, chiefly against Vizetelly & Co., and ostensibly for the purpose of protecting boys and girls, against what was called "pernicious literature." A society styling itself the "National Vigilance Association" eventually took the matter in hand. Its secretary, the person usually representing it in public, was a man named Coote; the agent for its publications was a Protestant fanatic named Kensit;[2] among those who gave it their countenance was W. T. Stead, then, as already mentioned, editor of "The Pall Mall Gazette." The publications of Kensit on "The High Church Confessional," and those of Stead on "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," would have seemed to indicate that both Kensit and Stead favoured the doctrine of outspokenness or publicity to which Zola gave effect in his novels, the doctrine which he summed up in the words, "Let all be set forth so that all may be healed." But although in the estimation of Kensit and Stead it was quite right that they should speak out, the idea of allowing Zola the same privilege was nonsense. He was Belial, whereas of them it might be said: "Mark the perfect men, and behold the upright." Thus they might circulate descriptions of vice, — even allow them, as in the case of "The Maiden Tribute," to be hawked about the streets in penny numbers[1]; but Zola must not picture vice in his books.

---

[1] About this time Vizetelly & Co. were selling no fewer than eighteen of Zola's books. And a sale of one thousand copies a week, representing one of fifty-two thousand a year, would not really be large in a publisher's estimation. It would represent an average of less than three thousand copies a year for each work, but of course the newer volumes sold more largely than the older ones.

[2] "Truth," September 22, 1898.

Among the members of the so-called "National Vigilance Association" were various parsons and priests who naturally abominated such an infidel as Zola, and some of whom subsequently traduced him freely. These might accept the outspokenness of a Stead, but, generally speaking, they represented the doctrine of reticence and secrecy as opposed to that of publicity. Theirs was the policy, pursued through the ages, of wrapping everything up, cloaking everything over, and they were lost in anger, horror, and amazement when they found a different course being pursued. They ignored Zola's position altogether, though for years he had been calling to them and those who resembled them: "You claim to reform the world, you preach and you prate; but although your endeavours may be honest you do little or no good. Evil exists on all sides, society is rotten at the core; but you merely cover up abominations, you even feign at times to ignore their existence, though they lie little below the surface and poison all around them. The system of reticence and concealment which you pursue is a profound mistake. It is one of the many consequences of that system that thousands of girls are cast every year into the arms of seducers, that thousands of young men kneel at the feet of harlots. Abortion is practised among the married as among the unmarried. Drunkenness is in your midst. Your prisons are full. Your gibbets and guillotines are always in use. Cheating and swindling are commonplaces of your every-day life. Well, I am resolved to tear the veil asunder, to set forth everything, to conceal nothing. I shall shock the world undoubtedly, but it is only by bringing things to light, by disgusting people with themselves and their surroundings, that there will be a possibility of remedying the many evils which prey on the community at large. Eighteen hundred years have elapsed since the carpenter of Nazareth walked the earth. You and your forerunners have had those eighteen hundred years at your disposal. What have you done in them? How much, or rather how little real good have you effected with all your organisations, your great authority, your exceeding wealth, your devotion, your piety, your talent, which at times has blossomed into genius? You have extirpated nothing whatever; your system has tended chiefly to the dissemination of hypocrisy and cant; you have failed egregiously; and to explain your failure you preach the ridiculous doctrine of the Fall, invented expressly to account for the impotency of priestcraft. I have nothing to say — as yet — on the subject of your belief in a future state, of your system of rewards or penalties after life, for good or evil conduct in the world, though it is one, half threat and half bribe, for which there should be no occasion. But I take human society as it is, and by exposing the errors of its ways I hope to set afoot, to encourage among practical reformers, a movement of social regeneration, which will perhaps achieve, in a few centuries, a happier result than you, even though appealing to the supernatural, have achieved in so many. And in any case I intend to try, whatever abuse you may shower on me, whatever mud you may fling at me, mud which will some day, perhaps, recoil upon yourselves."

---

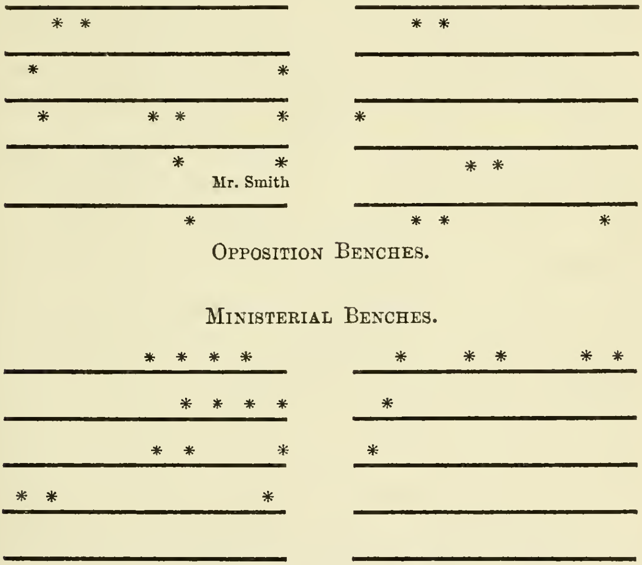
[1] "For more than a week, until 'The Daily Telegraph' took the matter in hand, the sale of 'The Maiden Tribute' converted London into a pandemonium. None who lived in the vicinity of the Strand at that time will forget the shouting of the vendors of the obscenity — often children only twelve years of age." — George Moore, on the "New Censorship of Literature," in "The New York Herald," London edition, July 28, 1889.

But how could men, trained to teach one and another superstition, wrapt in all the prejudices of their heredity and their caste, accept such arguments as those even if they had heard of them? The mere idea that man might regenerate himself without the aid of the supernatural was impious to their minds; the idea of stating the truth plainly, of rousing people by shocking them, was horrible to their delicacy of feeling, for they belonged to a white-livered generation, whence all robustness had departed. Perhaps if this Zola had been one of themselves they might have tolerated him, but he did not bow to the supernatural, his creed was different, and he was therefore a rival, an enemy, particularly as he contemplated a world whence they would be banished, as it would need none of their ministrations.

Thus the campaign began and soon found an echo in the newspapers. At that time probably there were not twenty journalists in all England who had read Zola's essays and critical papers in which he defined his position and the purport of his novels. In the latter, as is well known, he abstained from preaching. There is nothing of the nature of a sermon in the whole series of "Les Rougon-Macquart" until one reaches "Le Docteur Pascal"; and one must admit that, although Zola had freely expounded his views elsewhere, the omission of those views from his novels was detrimental to him and them among those people who could not rightly understand any exposure of vice unless it were accompanied by preaching. Had he preached, the clergy, so many of whom believe preaching to be the chief function of their ministry, might well have been on his side, and even "Blackwood's Magazine" might then have hesitated to describe him as a man without a conscience. But he contented himself with picturing vice as vile, and the viler he made it appear, the more was he abused, the more was he accused of wallowing in it, of giving full rein to filthy libidinous propensities for the express purpose of corrupting all who read him! That charge was repeated widely by the English press, as is shown by the hundreds of cuttings from London and provincial newspapers in the writer's possession. And Vizetelly & Co. were accused of having deliberately chosen "the very worst" of Zola's books for translation.

As a matter of fact, in 1888 they were selling all the novels that Zola had then written, with the exception of "Les Mystères de Marseille," "La Confession de Claude," and "Le Rêve," which last only appeared in Paris in the latter part of that year. The publication of those books had been going on for four years, unchallenged. Each new volume as it appeared was priced at six shillings, and subsequently lowered to three shillings and sixpence. A few volumes, in picture boards, were sold at two shillings and sixpence. But the critics rushed upon "The Soil," the English version of "La Terre," and one man, who can never have compared it with the original, had the impudence to assert that it was "an almost word for word translation of Zola's bestial book." Readers who had never seen Vizetelly & Co.'s catalogue were also allowed to infer that the firm traded exclusively in "pornographic literature." Now, in that catalogue, two hundred and forty works were enumerated, and the Zola volumes were eighteen in number. But it may be said that other books were denounced also, the translations of Flaubert's "Madame Bovary" and "Salammbo"; Goncourt's "Germinie Lacerteux" and "Renée Mauperin"; Gautier's "Mlle. de Maupin"; Murger's "Vie de Bohême"; Maupassant's "Bel-Ami" and "Une Vie"; Daudet's "Sapho"; Paul Bourget's "Crime d'Amour" and his "Cruelle Enigme," which last the firm had issued in consequence of a laudatory notice in the staid old "Athenæum," surely the last journal in the world to recommend anything suggestive of pornography. But counting even all the works belonging more or less to the French realistic schools which Vizetelly & Co. issued, one reached only a total of about thirty, leaving some two hundred and ten books of other classes. Thirteen of those were certainly volumes of "The Mermaid Series of the old Dramatists" which some anonymous scribes likewise regarded as "pornographic" in that hour when cant and hypocrisy poured venom on virtually every form of literature that had not received the *imprimatur* of Pecksniff & Company.

The public having been prepared for developments, the question of "pernicious literature" was brought before the House of Commons by one of its members, Mr. Samuel Smith, who sat for Flintshire. He had married the daughter of a clergyman, and had a reputation for extreme piety. He was described at the time as "an enthusiast without enthusiasm, with a tall, expansive frame, a huge beard, a placid-life-like expression, and a mild feminine voice,"[1] which, said another journal, was "peculiarly suited to the expression of lamentation."[2] There was some fear, it seems, that there might be a poor attendance at the debate on the motion he meant to submit, indeed a "count out" was feared, but arrangements were made to keep a house for the occasion, when the aspect of the benches was apparently such as the following diagram indicates:



[From the "Pall Mall Gazette," May 10, 1888.]

Thus, of an assembly numbering between six and seven hundred members, just forty were found sufficiently interested in the morals of their constituents to discuss the motion submitted by Mr. Smith, which was: "That this House deplores the rapid spread of demoralising literature in this country, and is of opinion that the law against obscene publications and indecent pictures and prints should be vigorously enforced and, if necessary, strengthened." In the speech with which the member for Flintshire opened the debate he did not hesitate to describe Henry Vizetelly as "the chief culprit in the spread of pernicious literature"; and, according to a "Pall Mall Gazette" report, which he never contradicted, he said of the works of Zola that "nothing more diabolical had ever been written by the pen of man; they were only fit for swine, and those who read them must turn their minds into cesspools."[1] In this fashion does the Puritan prate when he goes on the warpath. For the rest, Mr. Smith talked *de omni re scibili,* "flinging his accusations broadcast. All kinds of literature, including daily newspapers, came under his ban. He wanted everything—books, magazines, and newspapers,—to be subject to some sort of restraint." He spoke in the "spirit which assumes that what is evilly suggestive to itself must be evilly suggestive to others." But as was added by the journal from which these remarks are quoted:[2] "What sort of literature should we have if it were all brought down to such a level as would satisfy the ascetic tastes of the Smiths? Where would the Bible be? What would become of Shakespeare?"

---

[1] "Notts Daily Express," May 10, 1888.
[2] "Pall Mall Gazette," May 9, 1888.

---

[1] That passage is not given in a reprint of the speech issued by the "National Vigilants," but it is inconceivable that a reporter should have invented it. Besides, virtually the same words as those given above appeared in an account of the speech in "The Birmingham Daily Mail," May 9, 1888.

[2] "The Scotsman," May 10, 1888.

After Mr. Smith's motion had been seconded by Mr. T. W. Russell, and endorsed by Sir Robert Fowler and Mr. De Lisle, another member, Mr. (afterwards Sir F. S.) Powell, leaving French novels on one side, called attention to certain circulars "headed with Scriptural texts and looking like religious tracts" which were circulated in English homes, apropos of the spread of contagious disease in India, and which, in his opinion, were calculated to do much harm.

Then came the Government spokesman, Mr. Henry Matthews, one of the most unpopular Home Secretaries that Great Britain has known since the time of the Walpole under whose effete administration the public tore down the railings of Hyde Park. Mr. Matthews, a lawyer and a Roman Catholic, was subsequently given a peerage; but in 1888 he sat in the House of Commons for the city of Birmingham. He agreed very largely with what Mr. Smith had said, and he asserted that "in comparing French modern literature with classical literature it had to be borne in mind that, while the latter was written with no evil purpose (!), the former was written with the object of directing attention to the foulest passions of which human nature was capable, and to depict them in the most attractive forms" — an allegation which, applied to Zola's works, can only be described as astounding. But the Home Secretary also denounced the "penny dreadfuls," the quack advertisements, and the full reports of divorce cases which appeared in the daily press. And on the question of instituting prosecutions he said:

> "The reason why the law was not more frequently put in force was the difficulty that was experienced in getting juries to draw a hard and fast line, and to convict in all cases that crossed that

line. He had given careful attention to this question, and he should deprecate handing over to the Public Prosecutor, or anybody else, the task of deciding what was the straight and narrow line which divided what was punishable, criminal, and obscene within the meaning of the law, and what was merely indelicate and coarse. The public judgment was a safer guide than that of any official, and if the general moral sense of the community did not compel individuals to prosecute, no good would be done by trying to create an artificial moral sense by the action of the Public Prosecutor. . . . Serious evils arose from the failure of attempts to obtain convictions. So far, however, as he could influence the Public Prosecutor, who was, to some extent, independent of any Public Office and acted on his own discretion, he would certainly urge prosecutions in any cases in which it did not appear that more harm than good would result. . . . He was sure, however, that the hon. Member and all those who had honest convictions would not shrink from the slight personal inconvenience of putting the law in motion in any case of real public mischief."

The debate was continued by three or four members, one of whom, Mr. H. J. Wilson (Holmfirth) apologetically and naïvely declared with respect to the pious circulars on the working of the Contagious Diseases Act, of which Mr. Powell had complained, that their distribution was the only method of making the truth known, and that the only way to stop them would be to put an end to the horrible system that rendered their dissemination necessary. To this Zola, if he had been present, might have retorted that the circulation of the plain statements of fact contained in his books was likewise, in his estimation, the only way to make known the degradation of society at large, in order that remedies might be applied.

Mr. Smith's motion was carried unanimously, however, by the forty gentlemen present, matters being left in this position: The Government hesitated to institute prosecutions, and thought that private individuals should do so.

Meanwhile the campaign went on. Mr. Smith wrote a letter to the newspapers; another came from Lord Mount-Temple; and the press, with few exceptions, endorsed everything that was said by the commoner and the nobleman. The vigilant "Guardian" of the Church of England availed itself of the occasion to thunder against Sir Richard Burton and his "Arabian Nights"; "The Tablet" of the Roman Catholics jesuitically signified its approval of the agitation, because Zola's whole tendency was "suspected" (!) to be immoral; the conscientious Nonconformist journals, as was to be expected, said ditto to everything that Smith said. Some righteous contributor to "The Globe" wrote of Zola's books that they were characterised by "dangerous lubricity," that they "sapped the foundations of manhood and womanhood, not only destroyed innocence, but corroded the moral nature." "The Birmingham Daily Mail" declared that "Zola simply wallowed in immorality." "The Whitehall Review" openly clamoured for the prosecution of his publisher. "The Weekly Dispatch" impudently inquired, "If Mr. Vizetelly gives us Zola, why does he *pick* 'La Terre'? And if Daudet, why *pick* 'Sapho'?"—thus ignoring the fact that the firm published virtually all of the former's stories, and several of the latter's, and conveying, for its own purposes, a false impression to its readers. Indeed, misrepresentation of the facts was to be found in many directions. A few newspapers wrapped themselves in their dignity and said nothing; and a few remained fairly cool and sensible:

"The Standard," "The Scottish Leader," "The Scotsman," "The Radical Leader," "The Bradford Observer," "The Country Gentleman," "Piccadilly," "The Newcastle Chronicle," and "The Western Daily Press." There may have been a few others, for the writer does not claim that his collection of press cuttings is absolutely complete; but after examining some hundreds of extracts he finds little that is not mendacious or steeped in religious bigotry, puritanical prudery, or gross ignorance. And at all events it is certain that an overwhelming majority of British editors and "leader-writers" endorsed the views of the Pharisees.

The campaign was then carried to a decisive stage. A firm of solicitors, Collette & Collette, applied at Bow Street police-court for a summons against Henry Vizetelly for having published three obscene books, to wit, "Nana," "The Soil" ("La Terre"), and "Piping-Hot" ("Pot-Bouille"), by Émile Zola. The summons was granted, and on August 10, 1888, Vizetelly appeared to answer it. The prosecution had been entrusted to Mr. Asquith, — now best known as a politician, — and he, in opening his case, was about to deal with "Nana," when the magistrate, Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Bridge, who evidently had already made up his mind respecting the case, suggested that he should take the worst of the three books, namely "The Soil," — for which, by the way, Zola had received the decoration of the Legion of Honour three weeks previously! Counsel assented, referred the magistrate to various pages, and then solemnly declared that this book and the two others were "the three most immoral books ever published!" But having thus revealed how very limited was his knowledge of literature, he added, fairly enough, that it was claimed for "The Soil" that it had been published with a high moral object — namely, to show the degradation of the French peasant and the necessity of alteration in the laws by which he was governed.

Vizetelly's solicitor, Mr. Lickfold (of Messrs. Lewis & Lewis), argued on his client's behalf that he had a perfect right to publish these translations, the French originals of which were circulated in Great Britain without let or hindrance; and he contrasted them with English works which were sold widely and freely, such as Byron's "Don Juan," and Shakespeare's "Merry Wives of Windsor." Far from the incriminated books being the three most immoral ever written, said Mr. Lickfold, there were many within the cognisance of all men of any education which were very much worse. But the magistrate curtly intimated that it was a case for a jury to decide, and he forthwith committed the defendant for trial at the Central Criminal Court, admitting him, meanwhile, to bail in his own recognisances.

Vizetelly's committal led to great rejoicing among the Pharisees; and to improve the occasion the "National Vigilants" summoned a bookseller named Thomson at Guildhall (September 7) for selling an English version of Boccaccio's "Decameron." Mr. Forrest Fulton — subsequently knighted and appointed Common Sergeant of the City of London — prosecuted and asked for a committal, but Mr. Horace Avory, defendant's counsel, replied that the "Decameron" had been in circulation for over four hundred years, that there were three copies of the work in the English language in the Guildhall Library and some two hundred in the British Museum; and he contended that this classical work was not indecent in the eyes of the law. Mr. Alderman Phillips, who heard the case, quietly remarked that he himself had read the book both in Italian and in English, and he refused to send the defendant for trial, as he did not believe that any jury would return a conviction.

This was a rebuff for the fanatics, who now concentrated their energy on the prosecution of Vizetelly. The latter had taken his committal in a defiant spirit, promptly issuing the following notice to his customers: "The trade is informed that there are no legal restrictions on the sale of 'Nana,' 'Piping Hot,' and 'The Soil,' and that none can be imposed until a jury has pronounced adversely against these books which the publishers still continue to supply." This announcement, which was perhaps ill advised — though in counsel's opinion well within one's legal rights — momentarily enraged the "Vigilants," but they were about to receive important help. The Government, encouraged by the press, took up the prosecution, thus relieving the agitators of the cost of their suit.

Affairs now began to assume a more serious aspect, the question was no longer one of fighting a band of fanatics, but of contending against the law-officers of the Crown who would bring all the weight of their authority to bear upon the jury. In these circumstances Vizetelly decided to print a series of extracts from the works of English classic authors,[1] by way of showing that if Zola's novels were suppressed one ought also to suppress some of the greatest works in English literature. These extracts, which were preceded by quotations from Macaulay on the suggested suppression of the works of Congreve, Wycherley, etc., and by Zola's own explanation of the scope and purpose of his Rougon-Macquart series, covered a very wide field. Among the many authors laid under contribution were Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, John Ford, Thomas Carew, Sir George Etherege, Dryden, Congreve, Otway, Prior, Defoe, Swift, Sterne, Fielding, Smollett, Byron, etc., the series running from the time of Elizabeth to the early part of the nineteenth century. At the same time Vizetelly drafted an open letter to Sir A. K. Stephenson, the Solicitor to the Treasury, who now conducted the prosecution, and copies of the letter and of the extracts were forwarded to all the members of the Government and the leading London newspapers. The letter ran as follows: —

---

[1] "Extracts principally from English Classics," etc., 4to. London, 1888. (Printed for private circulation.)

Sir, — As the Treasury, after a lapse of four years since the first appearance of the translations of M. Zola's novels, has taken upon itself the prosecution instituted for the suppression of these books, I beg leave to submit to your notice some hundreds of Extracts, chiefly from English classics, and to ask you if in the event of M. Zola's novels being pronounced "obscene libels," publishers will be allowed to continue issuing in their present form the plays of Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, and other old dramatists, and the works of Defoe, Dryden, Swift, Prior, Sterne, Fielding, Smollett, and a score of other writers — all containing passages far more objectionable than any that can be picked out from the Zola translations published by me.

I admit that the majority of the works above referred to were written many years ago, still they are largely reprinted at the present day — at times in *Éditions de luxe* at a guinea per volume, and at others in People's Editions, priced as low as sixpence, — so that while at the period they were written their circulation was comparatively small, of late years it has increased almost a hundred-fold.

So long as the present prosecution was in the hands of the fanatics who initiated "The Maiden Tribute" of "The Pall Mall Gazette," and whose mouthpieces in both Houses of Parliament have gulled the Legislature with cock and bull sensational stories of there being ten houses in a single London street where young girls are accommodated with private rooms and supplied with indecent books for perusal, . . . so long as the prosecution remained in those hands, I was content to leave the decision to the sound common-sense of an English jury. Now, however, that the Government has thought proper to throw its weight into the scale, with the view of suppressing a class of books which the law has never previously interfered with — otherwise the works I have quoted from could only be issued in secret and circulated by stealth — circumstances are changed, and I ask for my own and other publishers' guidance whether, if Zola's novels are to be interdicted, "Tom Jones" and "Roderick Random," "Moll Flanders" and "The Country Wife," "The Maid's Tragedy" and "The Relapse," in all of which the grossest passages are to be met with will still be allowed to circulate without risk of legal proceedings.

In the Extracts now submitted to your notice, and which you must be well aware could be multiplied almost a hundred-fold, I have made no selections from cheap translations of the classics with their manifold obscenities . . . nor from popular versions of foreign authors, whose indecency surpasses anything contained in the English versions of "Nana" and "The Soil," and who, unlike M. Zola, exhibit no moral tendency whatever in their writings. . . . The Temperance cause never before found so potential an advocate as M. Zola proved himself to be in "L'Assommoir." A great writer who has exercised the wide influence on contemporary literature that M. Zola has done, whose works have been rendered into all the principal European languages, and who commands a larger audience than any previous author has ever before secured, is not to be extinguished by having recourse to the old form of legal condemnation, and especially at the bidding of a

Photo by Martinet & Jouven

Aix-in-Provence, the Plassans of the Rougon-Macquarts

fanatical party, the disastrous effects of whose agitation on the health of our soldiers is recognised and lamented by all military, and by most sensible, men.

Is life as it really exists — with the vice and degradation current among the lower classes, and the greed, the selfishness, and the sensuality prevalent in the classes above — to be in future ignored by the novelist who, in the case of M. Zola, really holds the historian's pen? Is *actual* life to be no longer described in fiction, simply because the withdrawal of the veil that shrouds it displays a state of things unadapted to the contemplation — not of grown-up men and women, but of "the young person of fifteen," who has the works of all Mr. Mudie's novelists to feast upon? This certainly was not the law in the days of Defoe, Swift, and Fielding, and it needed a canting age, that can gloat over the filthiest Divorce cases, while pretending to be greatly shocked at M. Zola's bluntness; but above all, it required a weak-kneed Government, with one who was once a literary man himself at its head, [Lord Salisbury] to strain the law in a way that an educated alderman refused to do the other day in reference to Boccaccio's "Decameron."

Time, we are told, brings round its revenges, and the books burnt by the common hangman in one age come to be honoured in the next. England may render itself ridiculous in the eyes of Europe by visiting the works of M. Zola with the same kind of condemnation which the civilised world has accorded to the writings of the degraded Marquis de Sade; still it requires no particular foresight to predict that a couple of generations hence, when the tribe of prejudiced scribes — who, ignorant for the most part of their own country's literature, now join in the hue and cry against M. Zola — are relegated to their proper obscurity, the works of the author of the Rougon-Macquart Family will take rank as classics among the productions of the great writers of the past.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY VIZETELLY.

The letter was dated September 18, 1888, on which very day the sessions of the Central Criminal Court began, but the Crown applied for a postponement of the trial, and as Vizetelly's counsel, who had been instructed to oppose any postponement, failed to attend, and Vizetelly himself was refused admittance by an officious policeman, the case was at once put off until October. This was very prejudicial to Vizetelly's business, particularly as the attacks of certain prints did not cease. Looking back, it greatly astonishes the writer that no application was ever made to commit the publishers of several London and provincial newspapers for circulating comments on a case which was *sub judice*, comments well calculated to prevent the defendant from obtaining a fair trial. But that idea does not seem to have occurred either to Vizetelly or to anybody about him. He at first had felt fairly confident respecting the issue of the case, and, as an old journalist, had entertained nothing but contempt for the terriers of the profession who barked at his heels. But his confidence had been shaken by the intervention of the Government and was finally undermined by well-meaning friends who, owing to the postponement of the proceedings, had many an opportunity to tender counsel. Their motives were most honourable and praiseworthy, no doubt. But the effects of their solicitude were disastrous. "In the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom," it has been said, but in Vizetelly's case there came chaos. While some urged him to fight, others begged that he would do no such thing. There was an incessant *chassé-croisé* of advice; and Vizetelly, now resolving on one course, and now on another, was at last at a loss what to do. Had he been a younger man the case would have been very different, for in his prime he had evinced much energy of disposition, and in difficult moments had relied on his own sound common-sense. But he was now sixty-eight years old, and though he was still of most industrious habits, the strenuous life he had led had left its mark upon him. Moreover, a complaint from which he suffered had taken a very serious turn, and frequent physical suffering was not conducive to perspicuity and energy of mind. Again, there was the position of his business to be considered. In consequence of the prosecution and the misrepresentations of the newspapers, the trade became afraid to handle any books he published, and thus his sales rapidly decreased. Besides, he found it difficult to obtain efficient counsel for his trial. The Parnell Commission was then sitting, and most of the great men of the bar were retained in it. Mr. (now Sir Robert) Finlay, Q. C., who was applied to, could not take the brief, having in hand already a large number, which the barristers engaged before the commission had been obliged to decline. Other men were similarly circumstanced, and there was one who honestly admitted that he did not like the case, and would therefore prove a very poor advocate. Eventually Mr. Francis B. Williams, Q. C., Recorder of Cardiff, was retained, with Mr. A. R. Cluer, now a London police magistrate, as his junior.

Beset as he was by various friends, who held that in the state of public opinion he was not likely to secure an acquittal, Vizetelly at last allowed some inquiries to be made as to what would happen if he pleaded guilty and withdrew the three incriminated Zola translations, such as they were then, from circulation. A letter bearing on this question, says: "If the rest of Zola's works that are open to objection are withdrawn, the Solicitor-general will be content that the defendant be not sentenced to imprisonment. He thinks that the taxed costs of the prosecution should be paid, and will leave the amount of fine (if any) to the judge, not pressing for a heavy one if the defendant is a man of small means." This communication gave a new aspect to the case. The question was no longer one of three of Zola's works; all of them might have to be withdrawn. Private testimony respecting the narrow puritanism animating the authorities at that moment indicated that they would show no fairness in considering the matter of other books by Zola, at least in the form of translations; for it is a fact that while Vizetelly's expurgated English versions were being prosecuted, the French volumes still entered the country and were freely sold there and circulated by libraries! Thus all who knew French were privileged to read Zola *verbatim*, whereas those who did not know that language were not allowed to peruse expurgated renderings of his books. Under the circumstances set forth above, Vizetelly finally resolved to contest the case; but, unfortunately, the inquiries instituted on his behalf had made his hesitation known to the prosecution and inclined it therefore to vigorous courses.

The trial took place on October 31, 1888, at the Old Bailey, before the Recorder, Sir Thomas Chambers, whose literary bent may be indicated in a few words: his favourite poet was Hannah More. The jury appeared to be of the usual petty-trading class. The prosecution was conducted by the Solicitor-general, then Sir Edward Clarke, who had already made a considerable reputation by certain cross-examinations, and who at a subsequent period defended the unhappy

Oscar Wilde, when the latter was convicted of unnatural offences. Sir Edward opened the proceedings at no great length. He first pointed out that, in the case of "The Queen *v.* Hicklin," Lord Chief Justice Cockburn had ruled that the object for which a publication might be issued had nothing to do with the question of its obscenity, the test of which was whether the matter so published had a tendency to deprave and corrupt those into whose hands the publication might fall. He also mentioned that it had been ruled in the Hicklin case that no excuse was supplied by the circumstance that other literature — especially that of two or three centuries previously — might contain passages conflicting with one's judgment as to what was fit for circulation. Then he passed to "The Soil," asserting that it was full of bestial obscenity, without a spark of literary genius or the expression of an elevated thought. That, of course, was his opinion of the book; and several years later he amused a great many people by giving his opinions on literature at large, thereby arousing the ire of a distinguished writer, Mr. Edmund Gosse, who unfortunately made the mistake of telling Sir Edward Clarke that he was a lawyer and not a *littérateur* — even as Mr. Chamberlain in his fiscal campaign subsequently reproached Mr. Asquith for discussing business when he was not a business man. But whatever might be Sir Edward Clarke's calling, he had a right to hold opinions on literature and to express them. Even a tinker may have literary views and may make them known, though it does not follow that they will be adopted by the community generally.

Having concluded his address, the Solicitor-general proceeded to read some passages from "The Soil," and he had scarcely begun when a faint stir among the public brought a loud cry of "Silence!" from the ushers. Ernest Vizetelly, who was seated at the solicitors' table, then turned and perceived several French newspaper correspondents and others striving to preserve their gravity, which had been disturbed by the curious manner in which Sir Edward Clarke pronounced the French names confronting him in the pages of "The Soil." For a time one might have imagined he was reading a novel of the kail-yard, for he persistently pronounced "Jean" as if it were a Scottish name. For instance:

"There was a lass, and she was fair,
At kirk and market to be seen;
When a' the fairest maids were met,
The fairest maid was bonnie Jean."[1]

The effect was the more curious as in Zola's book Jean, of course, is a man, whereas from Sir Edward Clarke's pronunciation it might have been inferred that he was a woman! However, the slaughter of French names did not continue long. The jurymen expressed their views clearly enough by interrupting a passage describing how the girl Françoise Mouche brings the cow, La Coliche, to the bull at the farm of La Borderie. The mere idea that such a thing could happen evidently amazed and disgusted them; but their surprise would probably have been less great if, instead of being Londoners, they had been yokels from the country, for, as various correspondents informed the writer subsequent to the trial, instances of the same kind could have been easily adduced from different parts of the United Kingdom, notably Wales.

---

[1] "The Poetical Works of Robert Burns," Aldine Edition, Vol. II, p. 225

One of the Pecksniffian arguments at that time was that Zola wrote for his own countrymen, and that even if he were justified in addressing them as he did, there was no excuse for placing translations of his works in the hands of English people, to whom those works did not apply. This was ridiculous, English society being quite as deeply, though by reason of the national hypocrisy, not so openly corrupt as French society. As for the case of Françoise Mouche and the cow, La Coliche, one might have found, as already stated, numerous instances of young girls being similarly employed in Great Britain. But of course such matters were not to be spoken of or written about! They must be cloaked over, covered up, so that they might continue unhindered! Besides, it was abominable to assert such things. The rural districts of England were moral paradises, safe in the guardianship of parson and squire! Only London was immoral, poor, wicked London, which bears the weight of many a sin which is not its own. It would be interesting, indeed, to know how far those moral paradises, the rural districts, contribute to the illegitimate births with which London is at times reproached. Is there even a single day in the year when London does not witness the arrival in its midst of some unfortunate country girls who have left their homes to hide their shame among the multitude of its inhabitants?

But one must return to the trial. When Sir Edward Clarke had read a few of his extracts the demeanour of the jury and their repeated interruptions plainly indicated what their verdict would be. Even then, no doubt, the better course would have been to let the trial proceed, in order that counsel might have his opportunity of presenting the defence, if not for the enlightenment of the jury, at least for that of the public at large. Mere passages, — there were twenty-five, some, no doubt, rather long ones, incriminated in a volume of hundreds of pages — proved nothing. One might find scores and scores of passages in the Bible which if taken without the context and the general knowledge one has of the book might make it appear undesirable. In the case of "The Soil," the facts should have been expounded, whether they influenced the jury or not. But Vizetelly's counsel, Mr. Williams, was evidently quite disheartened; he deemed it useless to prolong the case; and so after the briefest of consultations the plea of "not guilty" was withdrawn for one of "guilty." It was a complete collapse.

Mr. Williams, however, began to address the Recorder in mitigation of punishment, and in doing so referred to Zola as "a great French writer." "Oh, no, a voluminous French writer, if you like," said Sir Edward Clarke. "A popular French writer," the Recorder suggested. "A writer who certainly stands high among the literary men of France," Mr. Williams retorted; whereupon Sir Edward Clarke exclaimed in a pompous way, "Do not malign the literature of France!" Whether the Solicitor-general was qualified to express any opinion of weight on the literature of France might well have been doubted by all who had heard him pronounce the name "Jean." But Mr. Williams got in a last word. Confirming his description of Zola, he said: "It is apparent to all who have studied the literature of France at the present day."[1] And he might have added that Zola had but lately been made a knight of the Legion of Honour for the very book, for having issued an expurgated edition of which Vizetelly was about to be punished. On that subject Sir Edward Clarke stated that he did not ask for imprisonment, and however much one may differ from him, particularly in literary matters, it is essential one should recognise that, having won the day, he showed some forbearance. Vizetelly had naturally pleaded guilty, not only to the indictment respecting "The Soil," but to those respecting "Nana" and "Piping Hot," which were not gone into. The Recorder admonished him and then sentenced him to pay a fine of a hundred pounds and to enter into his recognisances in two hundred pounds to be of good behaviour for twelve months.[1]

---

[1] "The Queen *v.* Henry Vizetelly." Transcript from the shorthand notes of Messrs. Barnett and Buckler, of Rolls Chambers, Chancery Lane.

But a very important matter has still to be mentioned. A certain undertaking was given in court respecting the Zola translations published by Vizetelly. The present writer, his brothers, and many friends who were present, as well as the defendant himself, distinctly understood that undertaking to be that the three incriminated volumes and all other works by Zola which were as objectionable as those three should be withdrawn from circulation; but it was not said that none of Zola's books should ever be sold. On that point it is advisable to quote the shorthand writers' transcript, which shows how the Solicitor-general interpreted the undertaking: "*Sir Edward Clarke:* Of course I am very glad that a course has been taken which will not only stop from circulation the three books contained in these indictments, but which carries with it an undertaking by Mr. Vizetelly that he will be no party to the circulation of any other of the works which M. Zola has produced, any others — I should like to say — which are at least as objectionable as those which are indicted before your Lordship to-day."

---

[1] Sir Thos. Chambers remarked that the books were not of a seductive character, but "repulsive and revolting," and of course that was what Zola, in a sense, had tried to make them.

According to the writer's recollection, and that of his relatives and friends, Mr. Williams in giving the undertaking applied to the incriminated books the expression, "in their present form"; but these words do not appear in the shorthand notes which the writer holds. Nevertheless the language of Sir Edward Clarke suggests that some similar words had been used. It followed that Vizetelly, in all good faith, believed that he was entitled to sell Zola's books if he rendered them unobjectionable by further expurgation. But when other proceedings ensued it was even suggested that he was not entitled to sell them under any circumstances; and he was actually admonished for having inserted in his catalogue the words "Undergoing revision" after the titles of "La Terre" and "Nana." This plainly showed that the real secret desire of the authorities and the "Vigilants" was to *suppress translations of Zola altogether.* They cared not a jot what Vizetelly might attempt in order to satisfy their narrow puritanism, they were determined to regard all expurgation as inadequate, to pursue and persecute Vizetelly till he abandoned that author altogether. And to effect this they were ready to strain the law as it had never, perhaps, been strained before.

Meantime Zola, who naturally heard of Vizetelly's trial, attached, personally, little importance to it. He held that the English were making themselves ridiculous by setting up a puritanical standard of morality when their own literature contained many examples of outspokenness going far beyond anything that he had ventured upon. Apart from the writers of the past, he had some acquaintance with modern English novels such as had been translated into French, there being various series of that kind;[1] and he took the view that many of them, with the glamour they cast over vice and even their artful reticence, were certainly calculated to demoralise people, whereas his own rough frankness could only give the reader a shock, as indeed it was intended to do. At the same time he was not surprised at the outcry, for there had been one in France, where the ground was far better prepared for outspokenness than in England, where the cant of the Victorian era had ever striven to set restrictions on the novelist's art. Thackeray, we know, had chafed under them, and had written on his preface to "Pendennis": "Even the gentlemen of our age . . . we cannot show as they are, with the notorious foibles and selfishness of their lives and their education. Since the author of 'Tom Jones' was buried no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a MAN. We must drape him, and give him a certain conventional simper, Society will not tolerate the Natural[2] in our Art."

---

[1] On consulting the "Bibliographie de la France" some years ago, for particulars concerning English fiction in France, the writer found that in 1886 French publishers issued translations of fifty-four English novels; in 1887, translations of sixty-one; and in 1888, thirty-nine. The total number of English (and American) works of all classes published in French in 1888 was one hundred and twenty-three, but of these forty-two were merely new editions, leaving the number of the translations first issued in that year at eighty-one.

[2] This is perhaps the earliest reference to Naturalism in English literature.

As for the issue of the affair for the Vizetellys, of whom Zola then knew little, having only had a few business transactions with them, he did not feel deeply affected, for the matter seemed to him to resolve itself into a moderate pecuniary loss which, he imagined, the defendant would be well able to incur, having made considerable profits on the incriminated books.[1] For the rest, when in later years Ernest Vizetelly showed him various newspaper cuttings imputing to him a variety of statements, Zola remarked that some he had never made, while as for others his words had evidently been misconstrued.

As it happened, the affair proved far more serious for Vizetelly & Co. than Zola had thought possible. The firm then had several thousand pounds locked up in illustrated books which were not nearly ready for publication. The sales of its existing books had been declining for several months, so that its receipts had become small, though its expenses remained heavy and it had liabilities such as are always incurred in trade. Under these circumstances it was felt that the Zola translations, being a valuable property, could not be entirely sacrificed. The undertaking given in court was interpreted in the sense previously indicated, and, though the books were absolutely withdrawn for a time, it was decided to put them on the market again after they had been adequately expurgated.

---

[1] In various instances Vizetelly & Co. had acquired its interest in Zola's works from third parties who had bought the rights direct from the author. In some cases, under the law of that time, the copyrights had lapsed; and anybody could issue translations of the books so circumstanced. This will explain the circulation of several of the American versions in England. However Vizetelly & Co., as soon as practicable, put things on such a basis as to protect all Zola's new books, purchasing the sole British rights from him or from his assigns. At the outset Zola received moderate sums; later, after Ernest Vizetelly and Messrs. Chatto had taken his interests in hand, the payments rose considerably. In America a royalty of fifteen per cent was usually paid, Zola taking two-thirds and E. Vizetelly one-third of it.

A good deal of this work was entrusted to Ernest Vizetelly, but he was hampered by important restrictions. He learnt that the books were stereotyped and that his alterations must be such as might be effected in the plates, for it would be too expensive to reset the books in their entirety, though a few pages might be reset here and there. Under these conditions, as sentences and paragraphs often had to be struck out or considerably abbreviated, it became very difficult to fill the gaps which occurred. Ernest Vizetelly at least did the best he could. He spent two months on the work and deleted or modified three hundred and twenty-five pages of the fifteen volumes handed to him. Henry Vizetelly was in poor health at the time; but he himself attended to a few volumes, and his son's work was sent to him for inspection before it was forwarded to the printers. Whether he himself went through it in its entirety or not cannot be stated positively; but at all events the work was passed, and some of the Zola volumes were reissued.

Soon afterwards the "National Vigilants," elated by their previous easy victory, returned to the warpath. Henry Vizetelly was again summoned, this time for selling the following books: "The Assommoir," "Germinal," "Fat and Thin" ("Le Ventre de Paris"), "The Rush for the Spoil" ("La Curée"), "Abbé Mouret's Transgression," "How Jolly Life is" ("La Joie de Vivre"), "The Fortune of the Rougons," and "His Excellency E. Rougon," by Zola; "Madame Bovary," by Gustave Flaubert; "A Love Crime," by Paul Bourget; "A Woman's Life" and "A Ladies' Man"

("Bel Ami"), by Guy de Maupassant. At the same time W. M. Thomson, discharged when summoned for "The Decameron," was prosecuted for selling a translation of "The Heptameron," as well as other works; and other booksellers were likewise proceeded against in connection with some of the American versions of Zola's novels. The cases were heard by Mr. Vaughan, a testy old magistrate who long presided at Bow Street, and who committed Vizetelly for trial with respect to the following works: Zola's "Abbé Mouret's Transgression," "The Rush for the Spoil," "Fat and Thin," "His Excellency E. Rougon," "How Jolly Life is"; Bourget's "Love Crime" and Maupassant's "Ladies' Man." A few objections had been raised in the press apropos of the prosecution of "Madame Bovary," and with the gracious approval of the great Stead of the "Maiden Tribute," the summons respecting that work was eventually adjourned *sine die.*[1]

When Vizetelly returned to his office from Bow Street on the day of his committal, he took the only course consistent with integrity. He assigned everything he possessed for the benefit of his creditors, in order that his business might be liquidated. It was impossible to carry it on any longer. The wreckers had resolved to ruin him, and had succeeded to their hearts' desire. Friends came and expressed their sympathy — among others, Sir Henry Irving, the late Sir John Gilbert, and Mr. Birket Foster — but there was virtually no opportunity for any public protest. Not a newspaper now dared to print a word on behalf of this old servant of the press whom the "Vigilants" had chosen for their victim. On the morrow of the first trial the "leader" writers had hastened to avail themselves of his plea of guilty to pass unanimous condemnation on him. The delighted "Vigilants" had promptly printed and circulated extracts from the "Times," "St. James's Gazette," "Whitehall Review," "Star," "Globe," "Morning Advertiser," "Saturday Review," "Methodist Times," "Liverpool Mercury," and "Western Morning News"; and those samples of English press opinion might have been multiplied indefinitely. They showed all parties in agreement: the Tories and the Radicals, the Puritans and the Publicans. Coote, the secretary to the "Vigilants," had become *censor morum,* and all bowed to his authority. Yet some members of this so-called "National Vigilance Association" had been mixed up in various nefarious matters. There had been, as Mr. George Moore subsequently wrote, "the case of an unfortunate foreign prince, who was dragged into court on a charge of abduction or seduction, or both; when the matter came to be sifted it was found that he was absolutely and wholly innocent. So conclusive and so unimpeachable was the evidence, that Mr. Besley, who prosecuted for the Association, had to admit that he had nothing to say, and the judge replied, 'I should think not, indeed.'"[1]

---

[1] The same course was taken with the summonses for "L'Assommoir," "Germinal," and "The Fortune of the Rougons." And that against Thomson with regard to "The Heptameron" was withdrawn because the prosecution had mislaid its copy of the work.

Again there was a notorious Leamington case in which the "Vigilants" prosecuted, and in which, as Mr. Moore again pointed out, it was proved that two women clandestinely took an innocent girl from her employment, plied her with filthy questions, threatened her, and induced her to sign a paper which might have led to a boy of fifteen being sent to prison for two years![1]

---

[1] "The New Censorship of Literature," by George Moore, "New York Herald," London edition, July 28, 1889.

And this was the class of person that assumed the prerogative of Literary Censorship. The press prostrated itself before the new Terror, and the Government supported it by again taking up the prosecution of Vizetelly. The trustees of his estate resolved to fight the case and provided funds for that purpose, but while the selection of counsel was in abeyance, Mr. Frank Harris, then editor of "The Fortnightly Review," and one of the few who realised that an odious tyranny was being established, generously offered to bear all Vizetelly's expenses. Mr. Harris desired, however, that the defence should now be entrusted entirely to Mr. Cluer, who had acted as Vizetelly's junior counsel at the first trial, and who had also appeared for him at the recent police court proceedings. There were various advantages in such a course. Mr. Cluer's knowledge of the French language was perfect; he had read Zola's works in the original, and he knew with what a lofty purpose Zola wrote. The present writer favoured the suggested arrangement, but he had no power in the matter. Any suggestions he made were invariably set aside throughout the affair, on the ground that he had not been long resident in England, that there were many things which he did not properly understand, and so forth. There was some truth, no doubt, in those objections; but it often happens that a person who stands a little apart from a battle has a clearer perception of its chances than those who are actually engaged in it. The writer feared that a fresh conviction was virtually inevitable, but he also felt that Mr. Cluer would do his best for his client, and that the ship, though it might well go down, would then at least do so with colours flying. But it was held imperative that a Queen's Counsel must be engaged, for it would be ridiculous to pit a stuff-gownsman against the Solicitor-general! And so, after various delays and difficulties, as on the former occasion, the late Mr. Cock, Q. C., was retained, Mr. Cluer again being secured as junior counsel.

---

[1] *Ibid.* and "Daily Chronicle," January 12, 13, and 16, 1894. In the latter journal (January 13) Coote denied that "threats were used to induce the girl to confess crimes"; Mr. Moore retorted (January 16) by giving the report of the case.

Henry Vizetelly and his trustees were still resolved to fight the case, after their own fashion; and by way of answering any charge of having broken the previous undertaking it was proposed that Ernest Vizetelly should give evidence respecting the recent expurgation of Zola's books. His father inquiring if he were prepared to do so, he immediately assented. He went further: he agreed to take, so far as the Zola volumes were concerned, at least the odium of this second affair on himself by assuming responsibility for what had been done. It was impossible for him to hesitate, — no son would hesitate to shield his father as far as might be possible,[1] — but now that the time has come to write of these matters he owes it to himself, and particularly to his children, to point out that the responsibility which he assumed was not really his. The expurgatory work he had accomplished had been limited by the conditions imposed on him; within them he had done his best; but, even then, he had submitted his work for approval, saying: "This is all I can do. If anything further is required another must do it." He knows, by the "proof" slips in his possession, that a few further alterations were made in his work, the bulk of which, however, was passed, and sent to the printers. He was not surprised by that, and would not be surprised by it now, for he holds that the alterations he made were sufficient to satisfy everybody except fanatical Puritans. At the same time, in that hour of frenzied cant and unscrupulous injustice the responsibility he assumed was no light one, for even though he could not be proceeded against at law, the odium attaching to it might be very prejudicial to him. And while he had a wife and children to support, he had no interest in his father's business beyond being its paid servant; he knew that it had been established for the benefit of his younger brothers; which consideration had largely deterred him from pressing his own advice during the affair, for he did not wish to be accused of attempting to supplant anybody. If, to-day, he has pointed out the actual circumstances it is because he does not wish anybody to believe, as many have inferred for years, that his father's ruin and imprisonment proceeded from any neglect of his. It is true he has long allowed that to be thought, — it might be assumed from the account of his father in the "Dictionary of National Biography," — but the facts were really such as have been stated here.

---

[1] Frank Vizetelly, on whom as one of the managers of the business the summons was actually served, had offered to take full liability for the sales, but his father would not allow it.

Vizetelly & Co. intending to fight the case, as soon as the amount of Mr. Cock's fee had been ascertained it was voluntarily increased to a larger one in order to induce him to do his utmost. An attempt was made to arrange a consultation some days before the trial, but as a matter of fact Mr. Cock was not seen until about half an hour before the case opened at the Central Criminal Court, on May 30, 1889. Ernest Vizetelly accompanied his father, who was now in very bad health indeed. Mr. Cluer introduced them to Mr. Cock, and a conversation took place in a room adjoining the robing room at the Old Bailey. At the first words, Mr. Cock declared there could be no defence. He did not pause to argue. It was plain he wished to dispose of the case as quickly as possible. The defendant, said he, must throw himself on the mercy of the court, that was the only thing to do. Henry Vizetelly, who had come to the Old Bailey expecting something very different, was overwhelmed by this intimation. The blow was a *coup de massue* for him, and at first he could say nothing. His son, likewise very much amazed, and, in particular, disgusted with this blustering barrister who threw up the sponge at the moment of going into court, tried to interject a few words, but was curtly silenced. There was nothing, nothing to be done, so Cock, Q. C., repeated. Under the circumstances he might have returned the extra fee which had been sent him to induce him to make a good fight, but he never did. There was, however, one course that he was willing to take when he saw the distress of his ailing old client. He offered to ascertain what would be the result of a plea of "guilty." To Vizetelly's son that seemed a strange course to pursue. He did not like hanky-panky or aught suggestive of it. However, Mr. Cock rose — he was a fat, unwieldy man, with a startling red face — and rolled out of the room. Whom did he actually see? The writer is not certain, and in a case of uncertainty it is best to stay one's pen. But when Mr. Cock returned he *said* in presence of the defendant, his son, and Mr. Cluer, that the Solicitor-general was not leniently inclined and that Vizetelly's recognisances "to be of good behaviour" would have to be estreated; while the Recorder, Sir Thomas Chambers, held that there must be some imprisonment. Did Henry Vizetelly hear those last words? According to his own account, afterwards, he never did; for had he done so, in spite of all Mr. Cock's bluster, he would never, he said, have pleaded guilty. But the poor man may well have misunderstood his counsel. He was in a condition little short of actual physical collapse. In a dreamy way, as it were, he gave, or seemed to give, a feeble assent to everything. Had there been time, his son would have made an effort to reopen the question, for it occurred to him that, even then, one might perhaps have dispensed with Mr. Cock's services and have induced Mr. Cluer to undertake the defence unaided. But there was no opportunity for further deliberation; the court was almost waiting, and one went downstairs to meet the inevitable.

The proceedings were brief. Vizetelly took his stand at the foot of the solicitors' table, his son who sat there, and who at every moment feared to see him fall, holding his hand the while. For an instant, when challenged, he hesitated, then ejaculated the word "guilty," much as if he were expectorating.

Thus the case was never argued on its merits. Of course the Solicitor-general held that the previous undertaking had been violated, and asked that the defendant's recognisances in two hundred pounds should be estreated. Then Mr. Cock spoke of the expurgation of the books, which in his opinion "had not gone sufficently far," and added that the defendant was in his seventieth year and in very delicate health. On that point Ernest Vizetelly testified on oath that his father had suffered for some years from a complaint which had lately assumed a very serious character and necessitated the constant employment of surgical instruments. He then imagined his examination to be over, and was about to leave the witness-box when Sir Edward Clarke inquired if he were a member of the firm of Vizetelly & Co. The witness answered in the negative, he was a journalist by profession, and if previously employed by the firm he had then ceased to be so. But the Solicitor-general pressed him for the purpose, so it seemed, of extracting some undertaking with respect to the future sale of Zola's works or the destruction of the existing stock. This the witness had no power to give, and he was determined to say nothing that might lead to it being given by others. As the pertinacity of counsel continued, the witness, feeling somewhat ruffled, could not refrain from retorting: "You have made the defendant a pauper! What more do you want?" "Now, now," Sir Edward Clarke shouted back, "we want none of that!" "Well, I have nothing else to say," the witness added. "I do not belong to the firm of Vizetelly & Co., and I now know nothing about it." Thereupon the Solicitor-general, somewhat discomfited, had to let him go.

The Recorder then passed sentence. It was useless, he said, to fine the defendant, as he had no means to pay a fine. But his recognisances must be estreated, and he must go to prison, as a first-class misdemeanant, for three months. Vizetelly was at once led below; and his son applied, through counsel, for leave to speak with him before he was removed to jail. The Recorder granted permission, but the son was not allowed to follow his father. He and Mr. Lickfold (Vizetelly's solicitor) were told to apply at the small barred gate of Newgate, immediately adjoining the Old Bailey. They went thither and were admitted. A warder, or attendant, was told of the permission the judge had given, and went to make inquiries. Mr. Lickfold retired, and the writer remained waiting. Presently the attendant returned and said to him: "The Governor's answer is that you cannot see the prisoner. The judge has no power to give leave to see any prisoner when once he has left the court." It was useless to expostulate. Ernest Vizetelly could only withdraw, in considerable distress, for he knew that his father in the state of his health would require prompt attention and relief; and he had been anxious to do what he could in that and other matters.[1]

However, he met his brothers, and various arrangements were made to provide for their father's comfort. As the case was to have been fought, there had been no anticipation that it would end that same day, and nothing was actually ready. At last, Holloway being the jail where first-class misdemeanants are usually lodged, application was made there; but the officials knew nothing whatever of Vizetelly, he had not been sent to them. After some discussion

---

[1] At the risk of offending some readers by plain speaking the writer feels he may mention that his father was suffering from a stricture. All medical men will know the torture that ensues when the sufferer is placed under such conditions that he cannot obtain relief. The trial having suddenly collapsed, no medical man was in attendance to give evidence. Had medical evidence been given it is possible that Sir T. Chambers might have hesitated to pass a sentence of imprisonment.

Ernest and his brother Frank Vizetelly, proceeded to Pentonville, where they were received very courteously by the deputy governor, who said to them: "Yes, your father is here. Why he was sent I do not know; we have no accommodation for first-class misdemeanants. None has ever been sent here before. Your father is in a shocking state, he had been suffering for hours when he arrived here; I have placed him temporarily in our infirmary. I telegraphed to the Prison Commissioners but have had no answer. You should go to them at once at Whitehall, and ask them to remove him to Holloway."

This was done. The facts were set out in writing and sent in to some of the Commissioners, who, after an interval of an hour or so, received Frank Vizetelly, and airily told him that there was no mistake at all, that his father had been sent to Holloway and would be found there! The fact is that, while the sons were waiting, telegraphic instructions had been sent to Pentonville for Vizetelly's removal. That could not be effected in an instant on account of his serious condition, but when he was lodged in the infirmary at Holloway the Commissioners felt they were safe from any charge of neglect. Ernest Vizetelly, however, was not disposed to let the matter drop, and having drafted a question for the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) he wrote to Mr. Labouchere, M. P., to inquire if he would ask it in the House of Commons. He received the following characteristic reply:

Dear Sir, — I do not think that the clerks at the table would accept the question as written, for it enters too fully into details. However, be this as it may, I should not be the proper person to ask it, for I have had many actions for libels, and it would be thought that I had an eye to my future accommodation. As a matter of tactics, I should advise that no question be asked, for the only person who can reduce the sentence is the Home Secretary. I do not know if he will, but he certainly will not if his back be put up. — Yours faithfully,

H. LABOUCHERE.

24 Grosvenor Gardens, S. W.
June 1. [1889].

Mr. Labouchere's advice was certainly good, and it was followed. That is why the facts have never been disclosed till now.

Little more need be added here. Henry Vizetelly left a long account of his prison experiences which the writer may some day print. He was fairly well treated at Holloway,[1] but he writes that after he had left the infirmary (of which he was long an inmate, as the result of the neglect in which he was left immediately after his trial) he had great difficulty in obtaining water of the requisite heat for the treatment of his complaint, his room (previously occupied by Edmund Yates) being so far from the kitchens that, as a rule, the water was almost cold by the time it reached him. His health naturally deteriorated in confinement, but he did his best to look at things cheerfully, and found occupation in planning various literary enterprises. Several friends, notably Edmund Yates, showed great kindness at this time. Mr. George Moore did his best to ventilate the whole question of the prosecution and Robert Buchanan wrote an able pamphlet under the grim title of "On Descending into Hell." Ernest Vizetelly was then chiefly occupied in preparing and circulating a memorial to the Home Secretary, praying for his father's release on various grounds. Though two or three of the newspapers were already beginning to think that matters had been carried too far, few journalists, unless friends, were asked for their signatures ; but Vizetelly's son had the satisfaction of securing the support of several notable authors with whom he had never previously held communication. Their letters of sympathy touched him deeply, and showed him that though the newspaper press might be so largely under the thumb of the "National Vigilants," there were men of letters of high standing who retained all their independence of thought. A few, it is true, made certain reserves with respect to Zola's works, but all felt that Henry Vizetelly ought not to have been treated so harshly. The writer, unfortunately, has preserved no complete list of those who signed the petition (from one hundred to one hundred and fifty in number), and he must apologise for the many omissions in the one that follows. It will be noticed that it contains the names of half a dozen lady writers, as well as those of some prominent artists, who remembered Vizetelly's work as a wood-engraver, and all he had done for the pictorial press :

---

[1] He had the usual privileges of a first-class misdemeanant. His food was sent him from outside, he had some books and periodicals at his disposal, and a few articles of furniture were sent from his home.

"Sir Algernon Borthwick (now Lord Glenesk), M. P., Sir E. W. Watkin, M. P., T. P. O'Connor, M. P., Samuel Storey, M. P., Charles Bradlaugh, M. P., Dr. C. Cameron, M. P., The Earl of Desart, Sir J. E. Millais, R. A., Sir John Gilbert, R. A., W. P. Frith, R. A., Birket Foster, Linley Sambourne, Harry Furniss, George du Maurier, Prof. Henry Morley, Prof. Geddes, J. Arthur Thomson, Edmund Gosse, Dr. R. Garnett, Dr. F. J. Furnivall, Oscar Browning, John Addington Symonds, Leslie Stephen, Dr.

R. Maitland Coffin, Norman Maccoll, James S. Cotton, St. Loe Strachey, Hon. Roden Noel, Havelock Ellis, Robert Buchanan, Walter Besant, Hon. Lewis Wingfield, Thomas Hardy, George Moore, W. Clark Russell, H. Rider Haggard, Hall Caine, 'Ouida,' Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, Mrs. E. Lynn Linton, Mrs. Mona Caird, 'John Strange Winter,' Olive Schreiner, Mabel Collins, Harriett Jay, G. A. Sala, Edmund Yates, Frank Harris, Archibald Forbes, H. W. Lucy, H. D. Traill, A. W. Pinero, William Archer, Augustus Harris, Sir Henry Irving, Henry Arthur Jones, Fitzgerald Molloy, Ernest Rhys, S. W. Orson, Hon. F. C. Lawley, H. Sutherland Edwards, J. C. Parkinson, D. L., Arthur Symons, Alex. C. Ewald, W. R. S. Ralston, Max O'Rell, Savile Clarke, Brinsley Nicholson, G. Laurence Gomme, Frank A. Marshall, Grant Allen, Frederick and James Greenwood, G. B. Le Fanu, F. C. Philips, William Sharp, C. N. Williamson, William Senior, H. T. Wharton, Julius Mayhew, W. H. Dircks, Frank T. Marzials, W. Faux, of W. H. Smith & Sons."

Various persons in official positions, whom etiquette prevented from signing the memorial — for instance Lord Lytton ("Owen Meredith"), then British Ambassador in Paris, — conveyed privately to Ernest Vizetelly their hope that it might prove successful, but the only response of the Home Secretary was that he could not advise her Majesty to interfere in the case. Thus Vizetelly completed his "time" at Holloway, being released at the end of August, 1889. He returned to his home at Putney, and afterwards removed with his daughter and his son Arthur to Heatherlands, near Tilford, Surrey, where he spent, in suffering, the few years that were left him. They happily sufficed for him to see in England a considerable revulsion of feeling with respect to Émile Zola — of whom he had prophesied, in his letter to Sir A. K. Stephenson, that time would bring round its revenges. It will be necessary to allude to him hereafter in connection with Zola's first stay in London, but here one need only add that he died on January 1, 1894, after a final distressing illness. And the little graveyard of the village of Churt became the last resting-place of the man who was persecuted by the Pecksniffs of Great Britain, and whom the "Dictionary of National Biography" describes as the pioneer of the world's pictorial press.

X

THE LAST ROUGON-MACQUARTS — THE FRENCH ACADEMY — A VISIT TO LONDON

1888–1893

"Le Rêve" — How Zola rid himself of his obesity — "Germinal" as a play — "La Bête Humaine" — Zola longs to stagger the world — He becomes a candidate for the Academy — Why he failed to secure election — His novels "L'Argent" and "La Débâcle" — Ernest Vizetelly's position — He resolves to revive Zola in England — Translation of "La Débâcle" — Its reception in England — English opinion and Zola — French attacks on him — He visits Genoa — He writes "Le Docteur Pascal" — Conclusion of the Rougon-Macquart series — A few figures respecting it — Zola is made an Officer of the Legion of Honour — A reception in the Bois de Boulogne — An address to the Paris students — Zola and the Société des Gens de Lettres — He is invited to London by the Institute of Journalists — He hesitates to accept the invitation — Correspondence with Vizetelly — His reception in London — His paper on "Anonymity in Journalism" — At the Crystal Palace, the Imperial Institute, and the Guildhall — The Authors' Club dinner — Visits to Westminster Abbey, the National Gallery, and the British Museum — Some general impressions of London — The English visit and the French Academy.

In 1888, while Zola was being attacked so virulently in England he produced his story "Le Rêve," which some people regarded as indicating not only a new departure on his part but an endeavour to conciliate his enemies. In the first place, however, with regard to literary style, "Le Rêve" was merely a return to the idyllic manner of "Les Contes à Ninon," and "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret"; and secondly it has been shown[1] that the idea of this work occurred to the novelist even before he had finished "La Terre," and that he started on it immediately his book on the peasantry was completed. It seems certain, therefore, that "Le Rêve" was not the forced outcome of any outcry, as many have supposed, — as a matter of fact Zola never yielded to any outcries, — but came from him spontaneously, as part of his general scheme. Beginning the book in August, 1887, he finished it in August the following year, when it ran serially (from April till October) in a publication called "La Revue Illustrée."

---

[1] Sherard, *l. c.*, p. 228.

About the time when Vizetelly's difficulties with his English translations were just beginning, the British rights in "Le Rêve" were purchased by others, who issued a version of the story in a few newspapers under their control, and subsequently offered the book-rights at a somewhat high figure to Vizetelly. He — the proceedings against him having now commenced — declined them, without troubling even to look at the book; and this was very unfortunate, for whatever may have been Zola's purpose in writing "Le Rêve," it was a work to make even Pecksniffs reflect that this much-abused French author might not really be so pornographically inclined as they imagined. In any case, if the translation of "Le Rêve," instead of running merely through sundry provincial newspapers, had appeared in volume form in London during the agitation raised by the "Vigilants," it might well have proved a useful auxiliary to the defence.

If it were a mistake to regard "Le Rêve" as the outcome of any transformation of Zola's literary views, there occurred about this time a change in his personal appearance of the reality of which there could be no doubt. One evening, in the winter of 1887–1888, when he was at the Théâtre Libre,[1] he found, while walking down a passage, that his corpulence, which after steadily increasing for several years had now become extreme, made it difficult for him to get past Raffaelli, the artist, who happened to be standing there. "It's a horrid nuisance to have such a corporation," said Zola, apologising to Raffaelli, whom he had involuntarily squeezed. "But it's easily got rid of," the other answered. "If you wish to reduce your figure, you will merely have to cease drinking while you eat." And forthwith he gave some particulars concerning a form of treatment,[1] which he himself had followed, for ridding oneself of obesity. On the following morning Zola told his wife of it, but she laughed at him, declaring there was no sense in such a story. Besides, she said, he would never be able to abstain from drinking while he ate. Zola contended the contrary, and at last both husband and wife became impatient, and without exactly quarrelling, had, as the saying goes, "a few words together." But at last the morning roll and coffee, to which the first breakfast is usually limited in Paris, was served, and Zola thereupon took up his roll and began to eat. As for the coffee, in spite of all his wife's expostulations, he would not touch it; and for three months he persevered with this new treatment, drinking very sparingly and never at meals. Moreover, after a week or two he eschewed bread altogether. One Sunday in March (1888) when he arrived at M. Charpentier's house to dine there, Goncourt, who was present, could scarcely recognise him. He had lost over thirty pounds in weight,

---

[1] His play "Madeleine" (originally called "La Madeleine") which he had vainly offered to the Gymnase and Vaudeville theatres in 1866, and

---

which he had afterwards turned into a novel, "Madeleine Férat" (see *ante*, pp. 99 and 107) was produced with indifferent success at the Théâtre Libre in 1889 — first performance, May 2.

[1] The writer believes it is called the Schveninger cure.

and his face, so round and flabby of recent years, once more recalled the portrait which Manet had painted of him in his early manhood. After marvelling at this great change Goncourt lost sight of Zola for another eight months or so, and when he met him again in November he did not recognise him at all. Zola no longer resembled even the Manet portrait; he was quite emaciated, his cheekbones projected, and under his hair, which he now wore rather long and brushed back, his forehead showed forth like a lofty tower. The same energy and determination which he brought to bear in his literary undertakings had enabled him to effect this great change. He was then about eight and forty, and although, in later years, he broadened and put on additional flesh, he never again became obese. After a time he allowed himself a draught of water at his meals, but for the remainder of his life he ate very little bread.

It was in 1888 (April 21) that "Germinal," the play based on his novel, was at last produced at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. There was then a lull in the political unrest of France; nevertheless the Censorship had insisted on multitudinous alterations in the piece, for fear lest "revolutionary passions" should be aroused. To all the changes and suppressions suggested by timorous politicians one may largely attribute the failure of the play. The expenses were one hundred and twenty pounds[1] a night, and at the fifth performance the receipts had fallen to one hundred and twelve pounds. Thus a change of programme soon became imperative. Zola naturally was vexed. "It is largely the fault of the newspapers," said he to Edmond de Goncourt; "they din into their readers' ears that only amusing plays are worth seeing. But the misfortune is that on account of this piece I have had to put my novel 'Le Rêve' on one side and have thus lost time."

---

[1] About $600.

"Le Rêve" appeared in volume form in the autumn of 1888,[1] and subsequently, in conjunction with M. Louis Gallet, Zola drew from his story a libretto for his friend M. Alfred Bruneau, the composer, from whom the much-discussed opera "Le Rêve" came three years later.[2] Meantime Zola had written his novel, "La Bête Humaine," which was suggested in part, undoubtedly, by "Jack the Ripper" and the theory of "homicidal mania," and in part by the mysterious death of a certain French prefect, named Barrême, who had been found assassinated in a railway carriage. We know that Zola had contemplated a book on the railway world for several years, but had been at a loss how to utilize such a subject in fiction. The Barrême affair extricated him from his difficulty, and was clearly indicated as one of his sources of inspiration in the "puff preliminary" which "La Vie Populaire" printed before beginning to publish the story in November, 1889: "The principal episode of 'La Bête Humaine,'" said this announcement, "is a murder in a railway train; and there are so many points of similarity between the terrible scene depicted by Zola and the mysterious death of Prefect Barrême, that one may well inquire if the novelist, with an intuition superior to that of the police, has not supplied the most probable explanation of that dark affair."

---

[1] "Le Rêve," Paris, Charpentier, 1893, 18mo, 310 pages. Some copies on Dutch, India, and Japanese papers. Eighty-eighth thousand in 1893; one hundred and sixteenth thousand in 1903. Illustrated edition: Flammarion, 1888, 4to; illustrations by Carlos Schwob and Métivet; one hundred and fifty copies on Dutch paper. Was sold in parts at 10 centimes. Jeanniot had illustrated the story in "La Revue Illustrée," which paid Zola one thousand pounds for the serial rights.

[2] First performed at the Opéra Comique, June 18, 1891.

In a letter addressed to M. Charpentier in August, 1889, while he was writing "La Bête Humaine," at Médan, Zola said:

> "I am working on my novel passionately and shall certainly have finished it by December 1. . . . I hope to take Fasquelle[1] the first seven chapters on September 15, in order that they may be immediately set in type. . . . I have a desperate desire to finish my Rougon-Macquart series as soon as possible. I should like to be rid of it in January, '92. This may be managed, but I shall have to work very hard. I am fortunately in a good condition for work, I enjoy the most perfect health, and feel again as I did when I was twenty.[2] . . . We shall return to Paris on September 10, and settle quietly in our new quarters.[3] That will take us quite six weeks, and we should like to be settled before the cold weather comes. There is a great deal to be done, but we shall do it leisurely, even if we have to postpone furnishing the place completely until later. In December we shall return to Médan to kill the pig, and, if it suits you, you shall come with us.[4] The weather here is horrible. . . . I hope you will have some sunshine as you have gone yonder [to the Riviera] in search of it. . . . Ah! my friend if I were only thirty, you should see what I would do! I would stagger the world!"

It was in the spring of 1890 that "La Bête Humaine" appeared in volume form; and to some readers it might seem that Zola showed great boldness in coming forward as a candidate for the French Academy at the very time of issuing such a work,[1] one of his most audacious. That however, would be in some degree an error, as we propose to show.

---

[1] M. Eugène Fasquelle had now acquired an interest in M. Charpentier's publishing business, which he ultimately purchased.

[2] This was the result of having rid himself of his obesity.

[3] The allusion is to the house in the Rue de Bruxelles (21 *bis*), which Zola made his Paris home until his death.

[4] In his later years Zola kept Christmas and New Year's Day at Médan, and then usually had a house-party there.

A great deal has been written on the subject of the Academy and the failure of eminent men to secure admission to its ranks. Various considerations have influenced it at different times, but it has generally shown a marked dislike for innovators, men of independent character, and pushing proclivities. To have presented oneself for election, even repeatedly, and to have failed to find acceptance, can be counted no dishonour. Victor Hugo came forward four times in succession, but only on the fourth did he secure the necessary number of votes. In the old days, to quote only a few instances, the doors of the Academy were shut to great men like Descartes and Molière, and even to men of high standing, like La Rochefoucauld, the moralist. In our days Balzac was several times an unsuccessful candidate; while if Dumas *fils* found favour with the Immortals his father was always rigidly excluded from their midst. And apropos of the authors of "Eugénie Grandet" and "Les Trois Mousquetaires," as of Zola also, one may point out that it is only of recent years that novelists have figured, in any number, among the Academicians. Even at this time (1903) one can find merely four men who are essentially novelists among the forty.

It has been mentioned above that the Academy has shown no liking for innovators and men of independent and self-assertive character; now Zola was all that, and from the outset, therefore, difficulties beset him. His views on matters of religion were not at first the great obstacle which they subsequently became. There had always been a Voltairean element in the Academy; and Littré and Renan had eventually secured election in spite of all the bitter hostility of Monseigneur Dupanloup, the "Eagle of Orleans." True it is that Dupanloup had failed to keep them out by the very violence of his opposition, and since 1882 the Church had been represented in the Academy by a prelate of a different character, an unctuous man, Cardinal Perraud, who did not bluster like Dupanloup but exerted his influence in a stealthy way, after the fashion usually ascribed to the Jesuits. To him and his gradually acquired ascendancy, Zola's final defeat in the struggle for Academical honours was largely due. In that respect "Lourdes" and "Rome" sealed his fate, as he himself freely acknowledged to his friends. But when he first came forward as a candidate he had written nothing irretrievable from the Catholic standpoint. Though he had "The Conquest of Plassans" and "Abbé Mouret's Transgression" behind him, the former dealt only with the political and worldly intrigues of a priest, and the latter, if it questioned the vow of perpetual chastity, at least ended with the repentance and submission of the offender. Besides, "The Dream," with all its mysticism and religiosity, was of a nature to propitiate rather than offend the clericals.

---

[1] "La Bête Humaine," Paris, Charpentier, 1890, 18mo, 419 pages. Some copies on Dutch, India, and Japanese papers. Eighty-eighth thousand in 1893; ninety-ninth thousand in 1903.

On the other hand, however, Zola's political and social views gave great offence to conservatives generally, and in the eighties the Dukes de Broglie and d'Audiffret-Pasquier were very powerful in the Academy. They and those who followed them regarded the author of "Les Rougon-Macquart" as a revolutionist. His turbulence and self-assertiveness alarmed them, and it is indeed quite likely that if he had been elected he would have disturbed their quietude in many ways and possibly have seized the lion's share in the control of the Academy's labours. There was also, of course, the question of the outspokenness of Naturalism, which weighed considerably with one section of the Academy;[1] though it was never — as some English writers have assumed it to be — the chief cause of Zola's failure. Their error sprang from their ignorance of the French character. If among those who voted against Zola there were half a dozen Academicians who firmly objected to his bluntness of expression, the majority was not disposed to magnify molehills into mountains, particularly as the Rabelaisian sense is common to many Frenchmen. But there were a score of Academicians who hated what they called the "revolutionary spirit" of Zola's writings, and who feared, too, that this pushing, energetic man who had been called "the Shark," as he himself admitted with a chuckle, might swallow them up if he became a member of their body. At all events such is the explanation given privately to the writer by some who supported Zola's earlier candidatures, and they ought to know the truth. Later, as already indicated, the religious question arose, and the opposition to Zola then became the more determined owing to the influence which Cardinal Perraud and his first lieutenant, the Count de Mun, exerted at every opportunity.

---

[1] It is notorious that Taine, who led a section of the Academicians, that of the "university men," opposed Zola because he used vulgar and even slang words in some of his writings. Taine, moreover, was in full sympathy with the aristocratic element in the Academy with respect to its endeavours to make the institution a kind of deadly-lively social club.

Zola's earliest Academical patrons were his friends, François Coppée and Ludovic Halévy. Dumas *fils* likewise supported him, as mentioned in a previous chapter. So did Jules Claretie, to the very end. Over a term of years he presented himself nearly a score of times, and on each occasion the votes cast for him dwindled, until at last only Claretie's was left. His other friends shrewdly regarded the struggle as hopeless. Some people have thought that if Zola had lived a few years longer he might have proved successful, but the writer does not share that view. For the last thirty years — to go back no farther — the Academy has been essentially conservative in its political and social views. To preserve a kind of reputation for fairness it has elected, now and again, a man of more or less advanced opinions; but the majority has always remained much the same, the "liberal" members never being more than ten or twelve in number. On consulting the list for 1903 one can only find nine who by some possibility might have combined together to vote for a man like Zola. On the other hand, it is not unlikely that time will bring certain revenges. Comparatively few years ago the Academy, which had repeatedly closed its doors to the author of "La Comédie Humaine," selected the "Eulogy of Honoré de Balzac" as the subject of its "Prize for Eloquence"; and at some future date the "Eulogy of Émile Zola" may be similarly chosen.

Zola was in nowise cast down when, at his first attempt to gain admittance (1890), M. Charles de Freycinet, a clever man, who did some good work during the war of

1870, but who afterwards degenerated into one of the hack politicians of the Third Republic, was chosen in preference to himself.[1] He had anticipated it, but he was resolved to offer himself for election at each fresh opportunity. "I am making history, literary history," he would say after one and another rebuff. "So much the worse for the Academy! Our grandnephews will learn that it refused me admittance twenty or thirty times in succession."

After "La Bête Humaine" in the summer of 1890, Zola turned to "L'Argent," a tale of the Paris financial world, inspired chiefly by the crash of the Union Générale Bank some years before. Of all the subjects he had hitherto approached he found this the most difficult to treat. He had no financiers among his friends, he had never dabbled in Bourse gambling, and was at a loss for information respecting much of the inner working of what the French call *la haute banque.* However, while frequenting the Bourse almost daily for a whole month, he obtained enlightenment from some gentlemen of the stock-broking world, to whom he was introduced. He also studied the detailed reports of the great swindles of previous years, going back as far as the time of the notorious Mirès, which was, of course, legitimate, the period of his story being that of the Second Empire. One may add that in writing his book he did not spare some of the Jew financiers of Paris. "L'Argent" appeared serially in the "Gil Blas," which paid twelve hundred pounds for the privilege, and was issued as a volume in 1891.[2] Goncourt mentions that while Zola was writing the work he again expressed his anxiety to finish his series. There were to be only two more volumes, one on the Franco-German war of 1870, and the other, in which he then took most interest, a general summing-up of his "family history" by a scientific man, Dr. Pascal Rougon, whom he thought of marrying to some retrograde, bigoted woman who would destroy successively everything he wrote. And Zola sighed that he wished he could obtain permission to inspect the papers of Claude Bernard, on whose published writings he had reared, as will be remembered, his theory of *le roman expérimental.* As for his projected "war" book, he did not think he could make much of a novel of it. His idea at that moment was to show some character "promenading" through the siege of Paris and the Commune.[1]

---

[1] At subsequent elections he was defeated by Pierre Loti, Henri de Bornier, Thureau-Dangin, Ferdinand Brunetière, etc.

[2] "L'Argent," Charpentier, 1891, 18mo, 451 pages. Some copies on Dutch, India, and Japanese papers; eighty-third thousand in 1893; eighty-ninth thousand in 1903.

When, however, he took the subject in hand — spending the greater part of 1891 in collecting and classifying materials[2] — his views changed, and he decided rightly to make the battle of Sedan the keystone of the work. The expression "*la débâcle*" occurs already in Alexis's "Notes d'un Ami," published in 1882, but at a later stage Zola thought of calling his book "La Guerre" ("War"). It is just possible that this was because a couple of French novels bearing the title of "La Débâcle" were in existence already.[3] However, French authors are much less punctilious than

---

[1] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. VIII, p. 141.

[2] Towards the close of the summer he allowed himself a holiday and repaired to the Pyrenees with his wife. It was then (September) that he first visited Lourdes and was struck by the sight of the pilgrimages. It immediately occurred to him that they would supply a good subject for a book, and to study them more closely he returned to Lourdes in the summer of 1892.

[3] The writer must admit that he has seen neither, but he has found one catalogued under the names of M. Claretie, the other under that of M. Camille Etievant. Both had appeared before 1885. It is of course possible that Zola had never heard of them.

English ones with respect to titles, and it would be easy to mention several instances in which the same has been used — by different writers — three or four times over. In any case, Zola reverted to the title of "La Débâcle" as being the most appropriate to his series, signifying as it did the "smash-up" of that imperial *régime* whose society he had been describing so long; and though charges of plagiarism were so often brought against him, it would not appear that any arose on this occasion.

Zola had found "L'Argent" a difficult subject, and now the preparation of "La Débâcle" proved a herculean task for him. He had never witnessed an engagement in the field; military matters were almost as foreign to him as financial ones. He had dealt with them in a few short stories only, such as "Le Capitaine Burle" and "Les Quatre Journées de Jean Gourdon." But he now visited all the battlefields which were to figure in his narrative, he followed the line of march of the Seventh Army Corps, whose sufferings he intended to describe, he studied everything that had been printed and published in France on his subject, and he was fortunate enough to secure a large number of letters and manuscripts in which eye-witnesses recounted one and another episode of the battle of Sedan. Some of those communications emanated from "privates," who set down their own curious personal experiences and often naïve impressions; and for Zola's purpose these were even more valuable than the reports of generals and other officers. What he made of his subject the world knows; of all the books he ever wrote "La Débâcle" has circulated the most widely.

One notable effect of that great epic on war was to determine some revulsion of feeling in England with respect to the novelist. Directly the liquidation of Vizetelly & Co.'s business had been decided on, Ernest Vizetelly had found his occupation gone, for there were no new books to be initiated or seen through the press, and even most of those already in hand were abandoned, at least for the time. Vizetelly was therefore reduced to very great straits. At a moment's notice, so to say, he had to seek a living elsewhere. He was a journalist by profession, but for two or three years he had virtually severed his connection with newspapers. Moreover, his press work had almost invariably been that of a foreign correspondent, and his experience of such duties, even with some knowledge of European languages and politics thrown in, did not give him much chance of securing work in London. Again, one editor under whom he had written for eleven years had retired; another was dead. He knocked at a few editorial doors and encountered an unpromising reception. There was a decided prejudice against anybody bearing his name. After the release of his father from Holloway he helped him in a few little ventures, but was unable to secure any regular remunerative work. Many young men with only themselves to think of often find it hard to begin life; it is harder still to begin it afresh when one is seven and thirty and has given hostages to fortune. Vizetelly was married, had two children, and was expecting the advent of another child. Robert Buchanan, whom he often saw in connection with his father's troubles, inquired about his own private circumstances, and on learning the position generously helped him. "As you know," said Buchanan, "there are certain people who taunt me in the papers because I draw a Civil List pension and yet make a considerable income by my pen.

Well, the truth is, Vizetelly, that the pension often proves very useful. It will help me to assist you, as it has helped me to assist a good many others."

When the baby was born and Vizetelly's wife was on foot again, "they took their courage in both hands," as the French say, and moved to a neighbourhood where living was cheap. And though their street was "slummy," and from their front windows ragged urchins were constantly to be seen fetching penn'orths of porter in pewter cans, and often sampling the liquor on their way home, there lay behind the little house they rented a large cabbage field, beyond which were the grounds of Carnwath House and all the trees of Hurlingham. Vizetelly chose for his work a first-floor room, whence one looked out on the cabbage patch and the trees, and tried to devise some means of earning a living. For a while the sale of his books and the pawnshop helped him, and he gradually contrived to dispose of a few articles to newspapers. But the one idea that haunted him was to bring Zola to the front again in England. It was neither friendship for Zola nor an overpowering admiration for his writings that inspired that idea. Vizetelly thought chiefly of the ruin of his family and the odium cast on it by all that had happened. At the same time he knew that Zola as well as his father had been cruelly maligned by the Pecksniffs and those who had abetted them.

Unfortunately nothing could be done at once. The next book that Zola wrote (after "Le Rêve") was "La Bête Humaine," and such was the state of public opinion that it seemed impossible to produce even a bowdlerised version of that work in England. Vizetelly felt — as he had felt with respect to the earlier translations — that one must proceed cautiously, that the ground must be well prepared in advance if the doctrine of outspokenness were ever to triumph. His father had acted too audaciously, too precipitately, with little or no diplomacy. And diplomacy was needed. It was useless to run against a wall of Cootes and Clarkes, an outflanking movement must be tried.

After "La Bête Humaine" came "L'Argent," and that book and its subject did not seem attractive enough to pave the way for a genuine revival of Zola in England. So Vizetelly again had to wait. It was a dreary time, but his wife was as plucky a woman as lived, and between them they managed to keep the wolf from the door. At last, in the summer of 1891, on hearing that Zola had begun a novel on the Franco-German war, it occurred to Vizetelly that the opportunity for which he had been waiting since 1889 might be at hand. There were great possibilities in the subject chosen by Zola, and it was one which had much attraction for Vizetelly, who with boyish ambition had tried what he could do with his pen and his pencil amid the fierce struggle which was now to be Zola's theme.

Communications ensued between them, but though the novelist speedily assented to the suggestions made to him, Vizetelly had much difficulty in finding an English newspaper willing to publish a translation of "La Débâcle" while the original was appearing in "La Vie Populaire." "Le Figaro," one may mention, had offered Zola a very large sum for the privilege of serialising that work; but he had declined the proposal, saying that it would be absurd to publish his narrative of the battle of Sedan, some two hundred pages long, in short daily "snippets." He preferred to take the twelve hundred pounds offered him by "La

Vie Populaire," which appeared weekly, and was able to allot several pages of each number to his work.

Vizetelly naturally desired to issue his translation in an English journal, but editors feared apparently that they might soil their immaculate hands if they had anything to do with the loathsome Zola. Thus there were repulses upon every side, until Mr. Kibblewhite, of the "Weekly Times and Echo," rising above the general prejudice, accepted the proposals made to him. The translation as inserted in the "Weekly Times" was anonymous, for Vizetelly was too shrewd to thrust himself forward after all that had happened. However, he now tried to find a firm willing to publish "The Downfall," as the translation was called, in a volume; and again, in this respect also, he encountered several rebuffs. Two publishers to whom proofs were sent returned the parcels unopened; others, who were visited, curtly declined to negotiate; one made a low offer, so low as to give the author little and the translator virtually nothing. Thus the book went begging. Vizetelly became disheartened, and his wife eventually suggested that he should cease his efforts, since they only consumed time in which he might have earned a little money. He felt she was right, but as a last attempt he sent a few of his proofs, with a letter, to Messrs. Chatto and Windus. This was a kind of forlorn hope. Judging by the firm's catalogue, there was apparently little prospect that it would accept anything by Zola. But Mr. Andrew Chatto and his partner, Mr. Percy Spalding, set prejudices aside and took the trouble to look at what was submitted to them. They agreed to publish the book, and were recompensed for their enterprise by its very great success. Such, then, was the origin of a connection which, as some readers may know, resulted in Messrs. Chatto publishing nearly all the Zola translations and "revisions" attempted by Ernest Vizetelly.

In the case of a new work by a foreign author of established reputation, it is usually advisable that the translation should appear at the same time as the original; but, owing to circumstances, the success of "The Downfall" was helped materially by the earlier issue of the French volume. Directly the latter appeared in Paris[1] Vizetelly recommended it to a few former war correspondents; and as the praise which Archibald Forbes bestowed upon Zola's work in a literary journal exercised some influence, a dozen laudatory articles soon found their way into the newspapers.

Moreover "La Débâcle" created an extraordinary sensation in France, Germany, and other parts of Europe. The foreign correspondents of the English press repeatedly had occasion to refer to it, thus virtually compelling attention to the book. In Paris Zola's enemies assailed him fiercely. They wanted to know what he himself had done during the Franco-German war. The Imperialists accused him of having slandered Napoleon III. The more zealous patriots declared it was disgraceful to have written such a book, which, said they, was a mere speculation on the country's misfortunes. And some took particular offence at the title of "La Débâcle."

---

[1] "La Débâcle," Paris, Charpentier and Fasquelle, 1892, 18mo, 620 pages; one hundred and seventy-sixth thousand in 1893; two hundred and seventh thousand in 1903. Illustrated edition: Paris, Flammarion, n. d., 4to, 527 pages; illustrations by Jeanniot; ninety copies on India, Japanese, and Dutch papers. The Bavarian Captain Tanera attacked the book in "Le Figaro," September 19, 1892, and his communication was reprinted by Lemerre, 8 pages, 8vo. Zola's answer to him, "Retour de Voyage," was also published by Lemerre, 1892, 18mo, 21 pages; forty copies printed, all numbered, those bearing odd numbers being on Dutch paper.

Why indeed had not the author chosen another? Zola, mildly astonished by this question, made answer that it was not he but the Emperor and his generals who had lost the battle of Sedan, and that he would infinitely have preferred to write a very different book if the military men had only allowed him to do so.

The work had been published as a volume in June (1892). and in August Zola, accompanied by his wife, betook himself, to Lourdes to witness the more important pilgrimages there, a glimpse of which he had obtained the previous autumn. From Lourdes he made his way to Italy, where he now set foot for the first time. On this occasion he would seem to have gone no further than Genoa, where he remained a short time, and where some attention was shown him. Early in October he arrived at Monte Carlo on his way home and wrote to Vizetelly, saying, "I am about to return to Paris to begin my next book, 'Dr. Pascal.' It will be a story of private life and passion in the style of 'Une Page d'Amour' and 'La Joie de Vivre.' Its chief interest will lie in its being the last volume of the 'Rougon-Macquart' series. In France it will hardly appear serially before February next, but you may already try to place an English translation of it. It will not offend the modesty of your fellow-countrymen."

The translation was promptly offered to the "Weekly Times" and accepted by it, the book rights being reserved. Under date November 4, Zola confirmed this arrangement, and writing again, ten days later, he said: "I can undertake to say that the story will contain nothing to offend the prudery of your compatriots, and, besides, I give you full authority to modify any passages which may seem to you to be *inquiétants*." As some may be aware, there were certain passages of that nature; and Vizetelly, bent on proceeding cautiously and diplomatically, deleted them.

Zola naturally took great pleasure in writing this book for, as he remarked to his friend, Mr. Sherard, it gave him an opportunity to pass his entire series in review and defend himself against many of the accusations brought against him.

> "It is not a book to stir the passions of the multitude," he said; "it is a scientific work, the logical outcome and conclusion of all my previous volumes; and at the same time it is my speech for the defence before the court of public opinion. . . . It will be a sermon on atavism and will set forth my theory that when men know how to master its influence they will be masters of their own destinies. And the conclusion will be the philosophical one which I have sought ever since I first took pen in hand to write the series: that we ought to have faith in life and confidence in Nature. . . . Yes, that despite all that is cruel and ugly and incomprehensible in Nature, despite all the suffering and injustice of life, all that is bad and seems irremediable in the world, we ought to preserve confidence in Nature, and stake our hopes on effort and work. Further, that, though we may not see it, we are surely pushing forward towards a certain end and object; that there is a field of hope in Nature, and that good will come out of all that is bad, that justice will emerge from the slough of injustice, that a day of beauty will dawn after a night of hideous darkness, and that the result of all our efforts and our suffering must surely be one that will reward the first and compensate us for the other."[1]

Zola sold the first French serial rights in "Le Docteur Pascal" to a periodical called "La Révue hebdomadaire,"[2] in which the story appeared from March till June, 1893. With the volume, issued a few weeks later,[1] a new genealogical tree of the Rougon-Macquart family was given, this including the names of the additional members created by Zola's fancy since his first inception of the series.

---

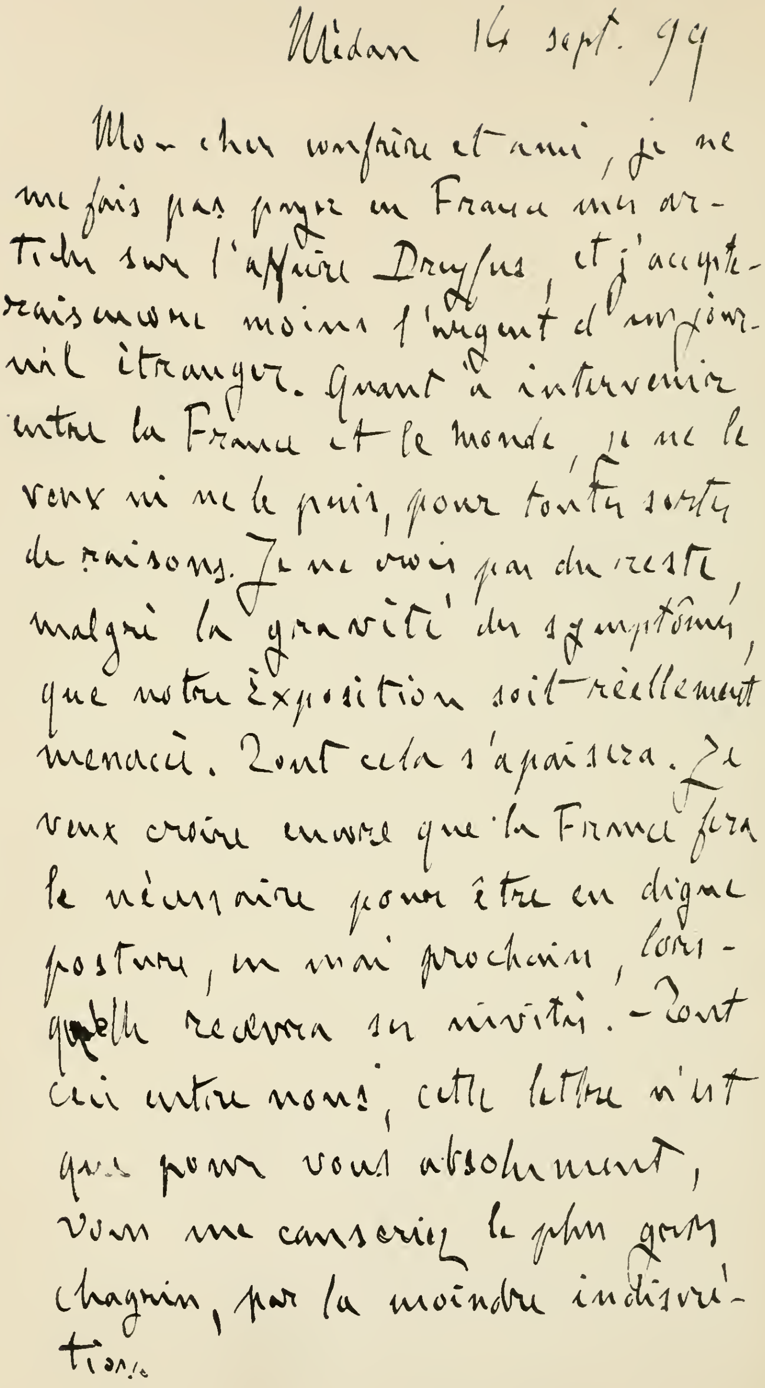
[1] Abbreviated from Sherard, *l. c.*, p. 251 *et seq.*

[2] It paid him £1,400 = about $7,000.

To celebrate its completion his publishers gave a *déjeuner champêtre* at the Chalet restaurant on the larger of the Grand Lac islands in the Bois de Boulogne. A numerous company of literary men and artists assembled there, but the proceedings may have aroused some jealousy among a few old friends, for men like Daudet and Goncourt were absent. The former, who had long since renounced the Academy and all its pomps, did not approve of Zola's "perpetual candidature" — he was, by the way, then offering himself for three *fauteuils* simultaneously — and thus there was a coldness between them. Goncourt also was opposed to the Academy, and meditated the establishment of a rival one of his own "for novelists only." So in this case again there was some coldness, particularly as Zola felt that certain references to himself in the earlier volumes of the "Journal des Goncourt," then lately issued, were not quite such as one might have expected from a bosom friend. We know, however, by later entries in the "Journal," that Zola and Goncourt continued to meet virtually until the latter's death. True it is that Goncourt at one time meant to appoint Zola to the chief position in his so-called "Academy," and that he afterwards renounced that intention. But, contrary to what some writers have

---

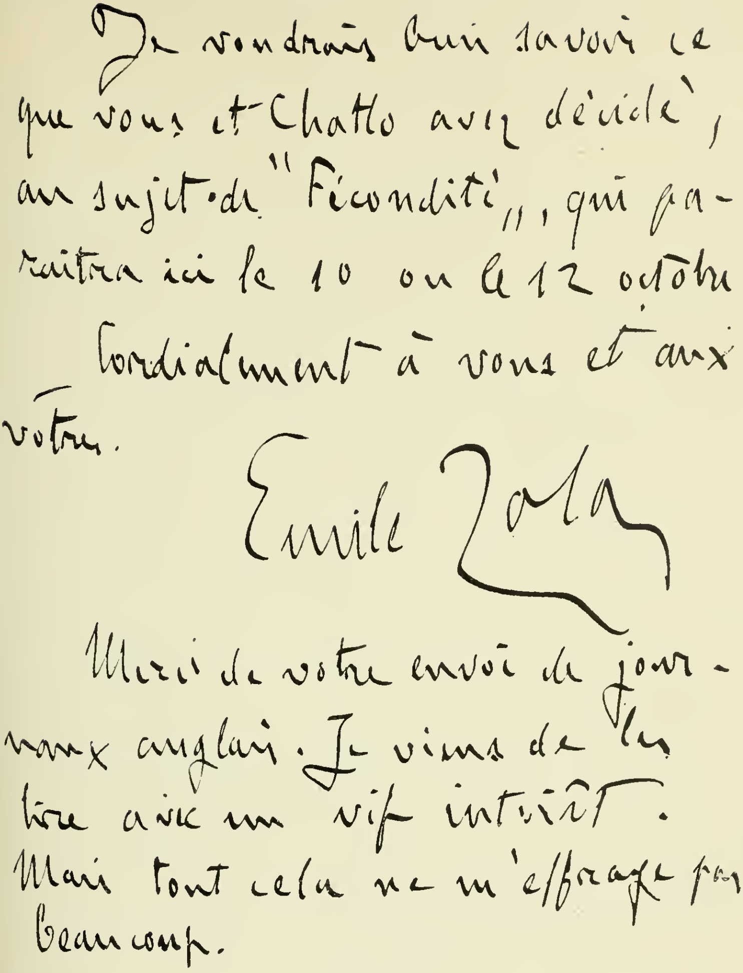
[1] "Le Docteur Pascal," Paris, Charpentier and Fasquelle, 1893, 18mo, 390 pages ; some copies on special papers ; eighty-eighth thousand in 1893, soon after publication ; ninety-fourth thousand in 1903.



Médan 14 sept. 99

Mon cher confrère et ami, je ne me fais pas payer en France mes articles sur l'affaire Dreyfus, et j'accepterais encore moins l'argent d'un journal étranger. Quant à intervenir entre la France et le monde, je ne le veux ni ne le puis, pour toutes sortes de raisons. Je ne crois pas du reste, malgré la gravité des symptômes, que notre Exposition soit réellement menacée. Tout cela s'apaisera. Je veux croire encore que la France fera le nécessaire pour être en digne posture, en mai prochain, lorsqu'elle recevra ses invités. – Tout ceci entre nous, cette lettre n'est que pour vous absolument, vous me causeriez le plus gros chagrin, par la moindre indiscrétion.

Facsimile tter



Je voudrais bien savoir ce que vous et Chatto avez décidé, au sujet de "Fécondité", qui paraîtra ici le 10 ou le 12 octobre.

Cordialement à vous et aux vôtres.

Emile Zola

Merci de votre envoi de journaux anglais. Je viens de les lire avec un vif intérêt. Mais tout cela ne m'effraye pas beaucoup.

zetelly

asserted, Zola was by no means disappointed at being left out of it. As a matter of fact, he had deliberately rendered himself ineligible by seeking admittance to the real Academy; and, besides, from the outset he had put very little faith in Goncourt's scheme. However, his friendship with Goncourt and Daudet, whatever their differences, subsisted till the last. Of the part which he took when Daudet died some mention will be made hereafter.

At the lunch at the Chalet des Iles the novelist's health was proposed by his old friend and publisher, M. Charpentier, and after the toast had been acknowledged, M. Catulle Mendès, who, as will be remembered, had gallantly assisted Zola when the columns of "La Cloche" and "Le Bien Public" were closed to "La Curée" and "L'Assommoir," spoke of the old quarrels between the Naturalists and the Parnassians, to which latter sect he, Mendès, had belonged. And, said he, though he still looked upon poetry as a much superior art to prose, he was anxious to declare publicly that he regarded Zola as one of the great literary glories of France. This was very pretty; and the novelist, not to be left behind in a matter of compliments, responded by referring to Mendès as a perfect artist and a good friend. Finally he proposed a toast to work, his old hobby, as he called it, the only one in which true happiness could be found. For some inscrutable reason General Iung — whose researches into the Iron Mask mystery may be remembered, and who happened to be among the guests on this occasion — thought the moment appropriate to re-echo a remark which had run through the newspapers, and to which one has already referred. "Monsieur Zola," said he, "you have written

'The Smash-up' ('La Débâcle'), let us hope that you will soon write 'Victory.'" "Ah, general!" replied Zola, raising his forefinger, "that is your business." And thereupon he sat down.

The value of books is not to be estimated by their length or even by their popularity. Yet it may not be inappropriate to point out that the Rougon-Macquart series, which Zola had now completed, was really a colossal performance. Besides a large variety of other work, the novelist had written the twenty volumes of that series in about five and twenty years, introducing, as he proceeded, no fewer than twelve hundred characters to his readers. The twenty volumes represented nine thousand pages of print, each of three and thirty lines, and, assuming an average of nine words per line and making allowance for "blanks," — by no means numerous in Zola's works, — one may say that they contained quite two million five hundred thousand words. Passing to another matter, one finds that at the time of the appearance of "Le Docteur Pascal" there had been sold over half a million copies of the ordinary Charpentier edition of the series. The popular illustrated editions of several of the stories, first sold in what one may call "penny parts," had also circulated very widely, at least to the extent of a quarter of a million copies; and further there had been some *éditions de luxe,* copies on special papers, and so forth. Moreover, there were five novels written before the Rougon-Macquart series was begun, with four volumes of short stories and seven volumes of essays and other papers, issued at various times; and one may therefore assume that between eight and nine hundred thousand copies of Zola's books had been sold at the period we now deal with. And of course thousands and thousands of readers had been reached by serial publication. Of the circulation of the many translations it is impossible to give even an idea, but some of the English and American volumes had sold by tens of thousands, and there were versions of many of Zola's writings in German, Italian, Russian, Dutch, Hungarian, and other languages. But books, as we know, by no means represented the whole of Zola's work; there were also many scores, if not hundreds, of ephemeral uncollected newspaper articles to be added to them, as well as several plays, so that his output stood at quite five million words. It was evident then that he practised what he preached, — that gospel of work, which others, such as Tolstoï, the prophet of resignation, occasionally derided but which he himself found all-sustaining.

He took it as a part of his text when speaking at a gathering of the Paris Students' Association, over which he presided that year, 1893,[1] for though the Academy still refused him admittance, some recognition of his labours was coming from other quarters. On the occasion of the National Fête, following the completion of his great series, he was raised from the rank of chevalier to that of officer of the Legion of Honour; and for some years in succession, a very rare occurrence, he was chosen as Président de la Société des Gens de Lettres. It was this circumstance that caused the English Institute of Journalists to invite him and other representative French writers to attend one of its congresses in London. Zola's connection with Ernest Vizetelly had now become a close one. A translation of "Le Docteur Pascal" had followed that of "La Débâcle," and arrangements had been made for an English version of a previous work, "L'Argent," Zola indorsing all Vizetelly's proposals in a letter in which he said: "My dear *confrère,* I leave translation matters entirely to you, and it is sufficient you should tell me that an arrangement is good for me to accept it. I know you to be devoted to my interests, and you are well placed to decide everything."[1] Under these circumstances, early in August 1893, soon after receiving the invitation of the Institute of Journalists, Zola communicated with Vizetelly and asked him for certain information. "I should like to know," he wrote, "what will be the importance of this congress, and whether it will offer much interest. You know my position in London; my work is still very much questioned there, almost denied. It certainly seems to me that my presence, and the words I might speak, might efface much of the misunderstanding, and that it would be politic to accept, in order to influence opinion. But what is your view? Reply to me at once at Médan."

---

[1] A translation of the address in question (made by the present writer) appeared in "The New Review," No. 50, July, 1893, under the title of "Life and Labour." Besides expounding the gospel of work, Zola answered the writers of Brunetière's *coterie* who had started the nonsensical cry of the "bankruptcy of Science."

Vizetelly, in his reply, reviewed the situation such as it had become since the "The Downfall" which had conduced to a movement in Zola's favour. The English critics, he said, still made all sorts of reserves, asserting, for instance, that a new Zola had come into being and one of them even claiming that there were three Zolas, the author of "La Terre," the author of "Le Rêve," and the author of "La Débâcle"; for they were still so far from the truth, so unable to grasp the significance of the Rougon-Macquart series as a whole, that they could only explain the latter works by picturing some wonderful change in the novelist. Had they looked into the matter more closely they would have found "Le Rêve," with all its mysticism and poetry, followed by one of Zola's most naturalist volumes, "La Bête Humaine," which alone, by reason of its place in the series, demonstrated the fallacy of their assumption. But as Vizetelly pointed out, they, and English people generally, had to be taken as they were. The position had certainly improved, and Zola's presence in London might well make it better still, for in conversation as well as in his speeches he might be able to clear up many misunderstandings. At the same time it was proper to bear in mind that the Institute of Journalists had members in all parts of the country, and Vizetelly did not know how far the provincial districts might share the views of the London district, whence the invitation had emanated. Personally he was very much in favour of Zola accepting it, but he would make some inquiries before anything further was done. Zola himself thought that course advisable, for he at once replied: "If I did not immediately answer the invitation it was precisely because I felt somewhat distrustful, though it is difficult to believe that they have invited me with the intention of receiving me badly. I do not wish the English press to promise it will sing my praises, but I should like to be quite certain it will be polite while I am its guest. Please make the inquiries you propose, and tell me frankly what you think of the situation." And he added in a postscript: "I forgot to tell you that the invitation is addressed to M. Émile Zola, Président de la Société des Gens de Lettres."

---

[1] The writer holds several letters written to him by Zola at various times, expressing similar reliance on his judgment. To print them all would be to exaggerate their importance. The above will suffice as a specimen.

That postscript was all important, for it explained the character of the invitation. Various amenities had passed between the French Society and the Institute of Journalists already, and now the Institute, being about to hold a conference in London, had courteously invited the officials of various foreign organisations. It so happened that Zola was one of the officials in question. If some other man had held his position in the Société des Gens de Lettres in 1893 that other man would certainly have been invited, and Zola in all likelihood would not have been asked at all. But the circumstances were not fully understood at the time, and some badly informed controversialists, in their anger at finding the hateful Zola a guest of an English newspaper organisation, subsequently heaped undeserved abuse on the Institute of Journalists. Vizetelly, however, made various inquiries of the Institute's officials, and having satisfied himself that Zola would have no reason to complain of his reception, he again wrote suggesting that the invitation should be accepted. On August 18 Zola, who meantime had also consulted M. George Petilleau, the official delegate of the Société des Gens de Lettres in England,[1] responded:

"I have just accepted, officially, the invitation of the English journalists, so it is quite decided that I shall attend their congress. It would be very kind of you to keep me informed of any incidents that may arise, and I also rely on you to let me know as soon as possible what toast I shall have to acknowledge [at the Institute's dinner]. I understand also that I shall be asked to speak on the question of anonymity in journalism. That is a big question in England, is it not? It would be very kind of you to tell me what you think of it, and what the majority of English journalists think. I want to know the ground beforehand."

---

[1] Mr. Petilleau has also been for many years President of the National Society of French Masters in England. He is French professor at Charterhouse.

Then on August 22 he wrote:

My dear *Confrère,* — I am preparing the few pages I wish to read on anonymity in English journalism, and I should like to have what information you can give me. I forgot to insist on one point: Is literary and artistic criticism anonymous, like other things, in England? Do your critics, I mean those who judge books and works of art, also refrain from signing their articles? Give me a little information on that point. Tell me clearly what is the position of criticism on your side (*chez vous*), if it numbers any remarkable men, if they are known, and if people become impassioned for or against them as in France. Again thanks, and very cordially yours, E. Z.

Vizetelly replied by sending him a memorandum, running to perhaps a thousand words, and Zola was further primed with information by others, some London correspondents of the French press, and also M. Petilleau, who took a prominent part in the proceedings. Writing again to Vizetelly on August 27, Zola said: "A thousand thanks for your excellent notes, they will enable me to write something interesting." In the same letter he gave some information respecting "Lourdes" which he was then preparing, and he again referred to that work in a note dated August 30, when he said: "I shall try every effort to make it one-fifth shorter than 'La Débâcle,' for such long novels are disastrous in France." Those efforts, however, were hardly successful, for when "Lourdes" was finished it proved to be only forty pages shorter than the novel on the war.

Though Vizetelly now had plenty of work before him — for besides completing the edition of "The Heptameron" on which he had been engaged in 1889, he was helping his father with his reminiscences, — he was anxious to make early arrangements with respect to "Lourdes" in the hope of profiting by any reaction in Zola's favour which the forthcoming visit to London might promote. In that respect, while he observed with pleasure that English newspaper men seemed to be recovering from their former aberration, he thought it hardly right to leave Zola entirely in the hands of a profession, many of whose members, only a few years previously, had covered him with unmitigated abuse. In these circumstances he communicated with Mr. afterwards Sir Walter Besant, whom he knew to be well informed respecting Zola and his works,[1] and who had also shown great personal kindness at the time of the Vizetelly prosecution. Besant took the hint immediately, but was almost at a loss what to suggest, for in all probability in the latter part of September, when Zola would arrive in London, few English authors of note would be there. However, he saw Mr. Oswald Crawfurd, chairman of the Authors' Club, and Mr. Crawfurd, a man of broad views like Besant himself, took up the matter with alacrity. During the interval which ensued, Mr. Besant wrote several times to Ernest Vizetelly, going so far, on one occasion, as to say, "A dinner will be given at the club to M. Zola and yourself on any day to be named — as quickly as possible — by yourself." But Vizetelly, while accepting the invitation on Zola's behalf, and also quite willing to attend the dinner, felt that he must not attempt to take any prominent part in the proceedings. If he had foreseen that his father, who was still living in retirement near Tilford, would be dead some three months later, he might have adopted quite another course, in order to procure some personal satisfaction for the poor old man who had been pelted with mud, ruined, and sent to prison. But he thought it premature to bring his father forward at that juncture, and therefore he said nothing to him or to anybody else on the subject. Thus it came to pass that after Zola's visit, the inquiry, "Where was Vizetelly?" — started, the writer believes, by Mr. Joseph Hatton — went the round of the newspapers; but while some raised it with the best of intentions, others repeated it with a malicious sneer, a circumstance which seemed to indicate that Vizetelly's son had really taken the wisest course. When the Journalists' arrangements had been ascertained, the Authors' Club dinner was fixed for September 28; and Zola, writing to Ernest Vizetelly on the twelfth, to express his approval, said: "Let me add, that I leave you full liberty. Whether those gentlemen invite me as a novelist or as President of the Société des Gens de Lettres, I shall in either case feel deeply touched and flattered. I am not a formalist; all genuine sympathy, in whatever respect, will go to my heart."

---

[1] Sir Walter himself related that when "L'Assommoir" came into his hands he sat up all night to read it, unable to put it down until he had reached the last word.

It was on September 20 that the novelist arrived in London[1] in the company of a dozen French journalists, — MM. Magnard, Scholl, Robbe, Xau, Mille, and others. Madame Zola and a few other ladies were likewise of the party.

---

[1] Vizetelly met him at Calais.

At Victoria station Sir Edward Lawson, now Lord Burnham, read in French an address of welcome, and Zola, when — like others — he had briefly responded, drove to the Savoy Hotel, where rooms had been engaged for him. The paper on anonymity which he read a couple of days afterwards to the journalists assembled in Lincoln's Inn Hall was, on the whole, well received. He admitted that the practice of signing political articles in France had undermined the authority of the press there, and tended to the destruction of parties; but, at the same time, said he, it had to be recognised that much of the inspiriting ardour of the political battle sprang from that same practice. On the other hand, as it was the custom for English political journalists to write anonymously, it might be well if they continued to do so, in order to preserve the power and authority of their press. But Zola pleaded strongly for signed articles in the departments of literary and dramatic criticism, pointing out, by the way, that such articles were indeed beginning to appear in certain English journals. One remark of his, to the effect that English newspaper men were well paid, elicited a loud roar of laughter, and there was considerable dissent when he likened some journalists to mere writing-machines at the beck and call of a superior. On that question some newspapers afterwards pointed out that on two occasions when there had been a change in the proprietorship of "The Pall Mall Gazette" the editors and the bulk of their staff had quitted the paper to uphold their opinions elsewhere. One may add that later, during the Boer war, various editors and others threw up their posts rather than write contrary to their convictions. One passage of Zola's address certainly seemed to have the full approval of his audience. It ran as follows: "To my thinking, when a writer does not sign his work, and becomes a mere wheel in a great machine, he ought to share the income earned by that machine. Have you retiring pensions for your aged journalists? After they have devoted their anonymous labour to the common task, year after year, is the bread of their old age assured to them? If they signed their work, surely they would find their reward elsewhere; they would have laboured for themselves. But when they have given their all, even their fame, strict justice demands that they should be treated like those old servants whose whole life has been spent in the service of the same family."

The journalists present having derided the suggestion that they were well paid, it seemed only natural that they should approve the idea of old-age pensions. At that time, of course, there already existed such organisations as the Newspaper Press Fund; and since then various pensions have been established by the Institute of Journalists; yet one may well wonder if there be even nowadays anything approaching adequate provision for the old age of journalists, of whom the great majority are able to save little or nothing of their earnings. It was undoubtedly this side of the question that most influenced Zola in his remarks on anonymity, which he regarded as being entirely in the newspaper proprietor's favour, for it enabled him, if he chose, to cast a writer adrift with nothing of the position which he might have held in public esteem as the result of his labours, if his articles had been signed. Briefly, in journalism as in other matters, Zola was on the side of the worker and against the capitalist.

No doubt when he was invited to London, purely and simply on account of the office he held, it was not foreseen that his visit would develop as it did. But although he was accompanied by several notable men he speedily dwarfed them all, becoming the centre of attraction at every gathering of the Institute of Journalists. There was a great dinner at the Crystal Palace, a reception at the Imperial Institute, and another, which was given to the journalists by the Lord Mayor, at the Guildhall. That historic building was then thronged to overflowing, and it was strange indeed — remembering all that had gone before — to see Zola and his wife marching in a kind of state procession, preceded by the City's trumpeters and followed by the Lord Mayor, the President of the Institute and other dignitaries, while some official who cleared the way called persistently: "Monsieur Zola! Madame Zola!" as though a couple of royalties were approaching.

Other entertainments were given at this time. Some of the theatres were thrown open to the guests of the Institute of Journalists; Sir Edward Lawson gave them a lunch at Taplow, there was a cordial little reception at the Press Club; while the Athenæum Club conferred honorary membership on Zola for the period of his stay in London. That last distinction was the most unexpected of all, and assuredly the Bishops belonging to the Athenæum cannot have known of it. At the Authors' Club dinner, which closed the round of "semi-official" gatherings, there were some eighty men of letters, with a sprinkling of publishers and others, present. When Mr. Oswald Crawfurd had proposed Zola's health — which he did in excellent French and very laudatory terms — the novelist, no orator, as he had carefully stated at the outset of his sojourn, read his reply, which may be given here as a specimen of his few public utterances, for he did not read or make more than a score of speeches in the whole course of his career.

"Since I reached London," he said, "I have received so many greetings and have so often been called upon to respond thereto, that I am a little ashamed to speak again. I need not, however, solicit your indulgent attention for any length of time. Indeed, in all modesty, I ask your permission to be very brief on this occasion. Nothing could have touched me more deeply than your very flattering invitation. I know that eminent writers are here assembled to extend to me the right hand of fellowship, and I feel that it is no longer the journalist but the novelist that is being entertained. (Applause.) Moreover, you have reminded me that in Paris I am the president of the Société des Gens de Lettres; so that in my person you honour all French literature. (Applause.) I should wish, therefore, to allow my own personality to disappear, and be nothing more than the delegate of my French brethren, to whom I shall attribute by far the greater part of the very cordial homage you have paid to me. I desire, indeed, gentlemen, to insist upon the feeling of fitting modesty that I shall carry away with me from all these functions. You have told me, Mr. Chairman, that, after conquering the world, I have come to conquer England. Will you allow me to reply that I know what I ought to think of my conquest? Amidst all the plaudits, I well understand that the opinion of your critics has not changed in regard to my works. Only, you have now seen their author, and have found him less black than report painted him. (Laughter and applause.) Then, too, you have reflected — 'Here is a man who has fought hard and worked a great deal'; and belonging as you do to a great nation of workers, you have honoured work in me. (Applause.) Lastly, it has occurred to you that a man cannot have conquered the world — according to the facetious expression of two of your number — without being worthy of some praise. Works of a different order in art to your own may have affronted you, but you were too sensible to refrain from according them some recognition as soon as you understood how much effort and sincerity they embodied. I am leaving London, not, indeed, as one who has triumphed, but as a man who is happy at leaving some sympathetic feelings behind him. My heart overflows with gratitude for the hospitality, so extensive and so refined, that you have accorded me. Here I say good-bye, or rather *au revoir* (loud applause); and I say it, through you, to your compatriots. I wish, through you, to assure my brother authors, my fellow-novelists, that I shall never forget the truly royal reception that a mere French writer has received in this huge city of London, throbbing with life and so worthy of inspiring masterpieces. And, gentlemen, as at the close of every banquet it is right to propose a toast, I drink now alike to the novelists of England and the novelists of France, to the good-fellowship of all authors in one universal republic of letters. (Loud applause.)"[1]

Ernest Vizetelly was present at the Authors' Club dinner, and spent half an hour in the crush at the Guildhall, besides hearing Zola read his paper on anonymity. But he abstained from attending most of the other festivities. Every morning at an early hour he arrived at the Savoy Hotel to assist the novelist with his correspondence, the hundreds of applications for autographs and interviews, which poured in upon him; and after the first few days, — as soon as Zola had a little leisure, — he took him to see one and another of the sights of London. Mr. George Moore also escorted the Zolas to Greenwich; Mr. Andrew Chatto gave them a friendly luncheon; Mr. afterwards Sir Campbell Clarke acted as their cicerone at the National Gallery, and Dr. Garnett at the British Museum Library. There were also some interesting visits to the French Hospital and the

---

[1] From a draft of the French text.

French Club under M. Petilleau's guidance, an excursion with Vizetelly and a fellow-journalist to County Council and Rowton lodging-houses, Rothschild almshouses, various sweaters' dens, sundry Jewish homes in Whitechapel, and Italian ones at Saffron Hill. On the whole, however, Zola was not impressed by what he saw of London poverty; he declared it to be nothing in comparison with what might be found in Paris. There was much want, no doubt, but it struck him that the passer-by saw little of it. And to emphasise his meaning he reminded Vizetelly of the Parisian ragpickers' "Ile des Singes" and the woeful Route de la Révolte, which certainly has never had its parallel in modern London.

Westminster Abbey naturally interested him, though his visit was a very perfunctory one, owing to the haste of the usual verger with the sing-song voice. When one first entered the abbey, however, some afternoon service was in progress, and after standing and watching for a time, Zola whispered to Vizetelly: "I did not know this was still a Catholic Church." "It is Church of England — Protestant," Vizetelly answered, whereupon Zola seemed lost in astonishment. "Protestant?" he whispered again, well, all that is very much like Mass to me." Then he shrugged his shoulders and led the way outside, where one waited till the service was over. At the National Gallery he was most interested in Turner, whom he called *la palette incarnée* and whom he regarded as being far superior to Claude. And he greatly admired Turner's water-colour sketches in the little rooms in the basement of the building, where he lingered for nearly a couple of hours. The British Museum Library also pleased him immensely, notably on account of its perfect arrangements which, were so superior, said he, to those of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. However, what he admired in London most of all was the Thames, at Westminster, at Waterloo Bridge, and again at the docks and away towards Greenwich. Of Hyde Park he formed a very poor opinion, while that royal barracks, Buckingham Palace, seemed to him a national disgrace: a view which most intelligent foreigners share.

On the whole, Zola was extremely well pleased with his stay in London; he had been received there with perfect courtesy, Sir Edward Lawson, Mr. Oswald Crawfurd, Mr. Charles Williams, then president of the London district of the Institute of Journalists, Mr. Lucien Wolf, and others had done all that lay in their power; and Zola on his side had at least made a breach in the wall of British prejudice. The result could not be otherwise than good, he said to Vizetelly; there would probably be less antagonism to his writings among English people in the future; but the point which interested him most of all was the effect his reception might have in Paris, notably among the members of the French Academy. He had been denounced more hotly in England than in any other country, he remarked, and the fact that English people were now beginning to take a more reasonable view of his work might possibly react on French opinion. But, as we know, the Academy did not disarm. The majority of its members would not suffer his presence among them on any consideration.

Moreover, he had scarcely quitted England when the fanatics once more raised their heads. At the Church Congress which assembled at Birmingham that year, Dr. Perowne, the Bishop of Worcester, had the effrontery to declare that "Zola had spent his life in corrupting the minds and souls not only of thousands of his fellow-countrymen and especially of the young but also, by the translation of his works, thousands and hundreds of thousands of young souls elsewhere." At the same gathering Mr. J. E. C. Welldon, then Headmaster of Harrow School and later Bishop of Bombay, denounced the novelist as "infamous," and besought the aid of Churchmen for the "National Vigilant Association," of which, according to "The National Observer," he, Mr. Welldon, was "a conspicuous ornament."[1] The Bishop of Truro, speaking at a church gathering in the west of England took a similar line, and complained bitterly that translations of Zola's horrible books were sold at the railway-station bookstalls, which, said he, would never have been allowed in the lifetime of that good man, Mr. W. H. Smith. Ernest Vizetelly answered the prelate in a newspaper of his diocese, pointing out that the only Zola translations sold at Messrs. Smith's bookstalls were those of "La Débâcle" and "Le Docteur Pascal" by himself, and that of "Le Rêve" by Miss Eliza Chase; and he defied the bishop to find in any one of those three books a single sentence that could give offence to any sensible man. Other correspondents reinforced Vizetelly; but the bishop, quite content with having uttered his slander, preserved absolute silence, that being a characteristic trait with some bishops — of various churches and countries — who, regarding themselves as very superior persons, seldom if ever offer reparation for the aspersions they may cast upon laymen. Yet the law of libel applies to them as to others, and it is perhaps a pity it is not enforced against them. But the lawyers say, or at least they said to Vizetelly: "It is useless to proceed against an English bishop. There is so much cant in this country that you would never obtain a verdict against him, however complete your evidence might be."

---

[1] "National Observer": "Realist and Ranter," October 14, 1893. Pp. 551–552.

As for Bishop Perowne of Worcester he was answered in "The Speaker" by its contributor, Mr. A. T. Quiller-Couch, as well as by sundry correspondents, one of whom pointed out that this chartered slanderer "had not so much evidence to back his insinuations and assertions as would wrap round a mustard seed." Mr. Welldon was also dealt with at length and very ably by Mr. Quiller-Couch, the controversy in "The Speaker" being prolonged until the latter part of November.[1] Ernest Vizetelly was at first unaware of it, but a friend who, having little acquaintance with literature, read that Liberal weekly chiefly for its political articles, said to him one day: "You ought to see 'The Speaker.' There 's a lawyer who is defending Zola and your father in it very vigorously. He is the kind of man your father ought to have had as counsel at his trial." "A lawyer?" Vizetelly replied, "why, what is his name?" "Oh! he only appends his initials 'A. T.' to his articles; but I felt interested, and so I consulted the law-list at my club. He 's a Queen's counsel, by the way; and the only Queen's counsel whose initials are A. T. is the Hon. Alfred Thesiger, so he undoubtedly is the man." The truth, however, had suddenly dawned on Vizetelly, who began to laugh as he answered: "The initials are A. T., you say; but the writer puts Q. C. after them, does he not? I thought so. Well, I am much obliged to you for your information, but you are all at sea. Your Hon. Alfred Thesiger, Q. C., is none other than Mr. A. T. Quiller-Couch!" Then, while his friend was expressing his astonishment, Vizetelly began to think of fame.

---

[1] See notably the issues of October 14 and 28, 1903.

In the controversy in question Mr. Welldon, who ended by admitting that he had read only three of Zola's books, received the support of clerics of various denominations. One of them, Canon MacColl, of Ripon, who would seem to have been then very fond of writing to the newspapers on all sorts of subjects, raised the old argument that even if Zola might have had some justification for publishing, for instance, "La Terre" in France, there could have been none for its issue in English and in England by Henry Vizetelly. No doubt the canon was right. As was set forth in a previous chapter the rural districts of England were and are terrestrial paradises, where immorality and beastliness were and are absolutely unknown. The observers who assert the contrary must be either liars or deluded fools. The clergy who are to be found in every village vouch for the high moral tone of their parishioners; and it follows that one must not believe those who chance to sit on juries at provincial assizes to try the various horrible cases, frequently from the aforesaid rural districts, which are never reported by a decorous press. Everything is for the best, then, in rural England, and the most perfect men in the whole world are the truth-speaking bishops who begin life in modest circumstances and end by leaving huge fortunes to their families, the many-sided canons fond of joining in every controversy, and the dogmatic clerical schoolmasters who take as their guide the saying attributed, perhaps erroneously,[1] to Richelieu: "Give me six lines written by the most honest man in the world, and I will find in them enough to have him hanged."

Henry Vizetelly, to whom his son forwarded "The Speaker" while the controversy continued, observed with some surprise Mr. Quiller-Couch's assertion that the public conscience would not permit a repetition of such proceedings as had been taken against him. He thereupon wrote to Mr. Quiller-Couch saying that in his opinion the public conscience could only find expression through the press, and that in the event of a new prosecution the press would again remain silent until the "National Vigilants" had secured a verdict, when it would once more join in approving the "vindication of the law." That view was shared by Vizetelly's son. Indeed, though Zola had been so well received in London, even by some of the provincial journalists who attended the Institute's Congress, though, too, newspaper men of education had come to a truer perception of his aims, and several wrote very favourably about his more recent books, it remained quite certain that he still had numerous enemies on all sides. At the close of that year, 1893, or more correctly on the first morning of the ensuing one, Henry Vizetelly died, and immediately afterwards another controversy began, this time in the London "Daily Chronicle." The chief features of the prosecutions of 1888 and 1889 were recalled by Robert Buchanan, Frank Harris, and George Moore, the first of whom dwelt on the attitude of the press with respect both to those proceedings and to Zola generally. Various protests arose, and, according to some people, it was quite untrue that the English press had ever flung mud at Zola or his publisher. The absurdity of that contention was made manifest by the publication, at that very moment, of several articles in which all the old lies and aspersions were repeated. These, it is true, appeared mostly in provincial journals; but two or three London prints did not hesitate to befoul yet once again the dead publisher as well as the recently banqueted novelist, whom G. W. Story, when recounting the controversy in "The New York Tribune," foolishly described as being "the most lewd writer in the world." It must be said, to Story's credit, that his article was a signed one; whereas the valiant scribes of the British press remained anonymous. They found, undoubtedly, that "anonymity in journalism" had its advantages, and wisely decided to cling to it. Since that time, however, the practice of signing critical articles has spread considerably and may some day become the general rule.

---

[1] See Édouard Fournier's "L'Esprit dans l'Histoire," Paris, 1860, p. 229.

XI

A CRITICAL GLANCE

1893

Zola's short stories — His early novels — His sense of poetry and his realism — Poetry and science — The futility of literary dogmas — The law of change —The influence of science on literature — Why Zola became a novelist — His attitude towards life and his fellow-men — The Rougon-Macquart series — The order in which it was published and the order in which it should be read — "Rougon-Macquart" and "Robert Macaire" — A survey of the volumes — Their human and animal characters — Great variety of their contents — How they were prepared — Zola's alleged ignorance — His handwriting — His style — Some fine pages — Some blunders — Various critical remarks — The series as a whole — A living psychology — Some remarks on translations — A glance at Zola as a playwright.

In previous chapters one has enumerated the many books — novels, volumes of tales and essays — put forth by Zola from the time he began to write until he completed the Rougon-Macquart series. That completion marks a date in his career, and it is now fit one should glance back at the work he had accomplished. His minor writings may be noticed briefly. His first volume, "Les Contes à Ninon," suggests the influence of Victor Hugo largely tempered by that of Alfred de Musset, with here and there, too, some sign of incipient realism. It is immediately apparent that much time and care were spent on the writing of these tales, the style of which is often perfect and always charming. The companion volume, "Nouveaux Contes à Ninon," published ten years later, is inferior to the earlier one, much of the matter contained within its covers being but newspaper work. Nevertheless "Les Quatre Journées de Jean Gourdon" is in its way admirable; and in "Le Petit Manteau bleu" one recognises the spirit which presided over the former tales. Realism is often quite manifest in this second volume, and the explanations given in its preface are almost superfluous, for one can easily tell that it is the work of a man who has passed through the furnace, whereas the first volume was all youth, buoyant, aspiring, with wings unclipt.

Zola's other tales, those in the volumes entitled "Le Capitaine Burle" and "Naïs Micoulin," belong to a later date and are very different from the early ones. If the influence of the poets appears in them at intervals, it is in diction rather than ideas. Even the poetic suggestion lurking in the tale "Pour une nuit d'amour," which Poe might almost have written, can only be traced with difficulty, for it is wrapped in a ghastly realism. The story of "Nantas" is perhaps the best of these later little efforts, as it is certainly the most powerful; but "Naïs Micoulin" is also one of the present writer's favourites, perhaps because, whatever its ardour, it does no violence to possibilities. Placed beside the tales of Guy de Maupassant, those of Zola, in spite of all the naturalism of their details, strike one as being more romantic, more imaginative; and this is as it should be, for Zola was largely a child of the sun, whereas Maupassant, however passionate his temperament, was always a Norman, deficient in the purely imaginative faculty but possessed of great shrewdness — intuition, so to say, — which assisted his powers of observation and his superb craftsmanship. Thus he excelled in transcribing the human document such as it appears to most Northern minds.

As it is with Zola's short stories so it is with his earlier novels: "La Confession de Claude" is a struggle between poetry and reality, the presentment of a soul longing for the empyrean but forced to surrender to all the horrors of degradation. The fragmentary "Vœu d'une Morte" contains indications of the same battle continuing. "Les Mystères de Marseilles" is a thing apart; but, at last, in "Thérèse Raquin" and "Madeleine Férat" realism triumphs brutally and in its first victorious hour blackens the canvas to excess. Average truth is disregarded — as Zola himself admits — and the agony is piled on to the point of nightmare. This is done, perchance, by the realist in Zola in order that no loophole may be left for the poet, also within him, to rise again.

But take the Rougon-Macquart series, and there, amid all the realism of twenty volumes, a revival of the poetic sense will be found displaying itself repeatedly. Remember the idyll of Silvère and Miette, that of Marjolin and Cadine, that of Angélique and Félicien, that of Serge and Albine, the Paradou, Hélène and Henri, the vistas of Paris from the heights of Passy, the love of Goujet for Gervaise, even that of Georges Hugon for Nana, the epic march of the miners in "Germinal," the epic charge of the cavalry at Sedan, Clotilde's communion with herself while giving suck to her babe, and all the other instances. There may be no trace of poetry and romance in "Thérèse Raquin," but Zola when writing that book must have known full well that he had only scotched, not killed, his poetic tendencies. To understand him aright, let us remember that he made his *débuts* at a time when science was enlarging her domain daily. For him she exercised a fascination equal to that of art. In his youth he had turned eagerly to certain scientific studies even while he was steeping himself in poetry, and later he devoured Flourens, Zimmermann, translations of the great scientists of England and Germany. He saw that there was often a deep poetry in science; he dreamt of making it manifest, — of going further, — of associating science and art, of establishing their co-relation, welding them together even in instances when to some folk they seemed to be antagonistic. His nature, as one has remarked previously, was a compound, a hybrid one, by no means unique, but such as is not often observed. "Lewis Carroll" supplies a somewhat approximate instance: in him one found the mathematician elbowing the romancer, only he did not dream of importing "Euclid" into "Alice." Zola, in doing so, or rather in doing something similar, was not entirely influenced by his own special nature, but was carried along by the spirit of his age, in which everything tended towards science. Those who remember Darwin and Faraday and Huxley and the others, and the thirst that came on so many young men in those days, will not gainsay it.

The literary critics declared, of course, and many of them declare still, that Zola was altogether wrong. Regarding Art as being so distinct, so different from Science that no amalgam could be effected, they laid down and still lay down certain rules as being necessary to salvation. That attitude was and is preposterous to the open mind which holds that no dogmas are of any account, and that of those who frame them one may say in Dante's words:

> "Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa."

It is true that some critics have asserted that if there be no finality in science there is a finality in art. But in fiction, with which alone one is concerned here, the form has changed repeatedly, and on each such occasion the loud protests raised by the representatives of old and recognised schools have proved ineffectual. One rule, one dogma after another, has been set aside, and still and ever the evolution has continued. To say that the artist in fiction must do this and must not do that is to expose oneself to the ridicule, at times, even of one's contemporaries, and certainly of posterity. Take a comparatively recent epoch and think of the dogmas and the protests brought forward by the Classiques in their great contest with the Romantiques in France, and remember who, in the end, were vanquished. Thus men of conservative views may protest, but if there be a good cause for any evolution, which one or another writer may essay, it will end by triumphing in spite of all the opposition offered to it.

The art of the novelist has been often likened to that of the painter, but it does not follow that this is the only possible comparison. A novelist may liken himself to a sculptor, in fact to anybody he chooses. Nothing, moreover, is final. The world, as modern scientists have just rediscovered, and as Heraclitus asserted three and twenty centuries ago, is not a being but a becoming. Change is the universal law, even in matter; and if some minds, imprisoned within narrow ideas and formulas, find it impossible to contemplate the possibility of certain changes, they must yield to the broader minds for which everything is possible. The world's changes are reflected in its literature. Science within our own time has profoundly modified the study and the writing of history. As for the novel, the Romanticists spoke no last word, for it was not in their power to do so. Whether Zola had arisen or not, it was fatal that the novel should at last embrace many things which earlier writers of fiction had never dreamt of including in it, that it should, in a word, follow the trend of the modern mind.

Among writers, moreover, there are always many whose aim is not mere amusement. Some openly declare instruction, enlightenment, to be their purpose. Some are only half conscious of their mission, some not at all, and it happens not unfrequently that a lesson is conveyed in books where it has been never intended. At one time the drama was the form of literature which appealed most successfully to the greater number. The novel at last acquired a similar position, and it followed that the writer who wished to reach the greater number had to approach them as a novelist. That had been done long before the time of Zola, who was both a writer with a purpose and one who wished to reach the majority. Now, if an author desire to bring about some reformation of the community, it is natural that he should begin by portraying it. If he wish to elucidate certain social, scientific, and psychological problems for the common good, it is essential that he should in the first case state them. In that event, say some pedants, he must confine himself to treatises of the accepted form. But the author answers no, for such treatises would not reach the greater number, and his purpose would then remain unfulfilled. To reach them he must approach them in the only literary form for which they care: he must embody his views in novels. "I have, in my estimation," said Zola, "certain contributions to make to the thought of the world on certain subjects, and I have chosen the novel as the best means of communication. To tell me that I must not do so is nonsense. I claim it as my right, and who are you to gainsay it?"

But let us pass to another point. The oft-repeated assertion that Zola confined himself to portraying the ulcers and sores of life is contrary to fact. He undoubtedly found more evil than good in the community, and he insisted on the evil because it was that which needed remedying. But he blamed nobody for extolling the higher side of life. He denounced the writers who cast a deceptive and often poisonous glamour over the imperfections of the world, he railed at many of the people who pretended to be very good, for he was not deceived by hypocrisy and cant; but, at the same time, he never held that mankind was naturally evil. He attributed its blemishes to its social systems, its superstitions, the thousand fallacies amid which it was reared, and his whole life was a battle with those fallacies, those superstitions, and those systems.

As he contended against so many generally accepted opinions it was inevitable that his work and even his purpose should be greatly misjudged. Critics took in turn one and another volume of his Rougon-Macquart series, and pronounced condemnation on it. It was only when, after long years, the series was at last finished that some little justice was shown to the author. It should be remembered that no volume of the series is in itself a really complete work. The series indeed is the book, the volumes are but chapters of it. Besides, they ought not to be taken nowadays in the order in which they were originally published. It occasionally happens that writers are unable to produce their works in proper sequence. There have been instances when the second and fourth volumes of some literary undertaking have been published before the first and the third. So it was with the Rougon-Macquart novels. Zola was no walking encyclopædia. Every now and again it happened that he was not ready for the volume which by rights should have followed the one he had just finished. He lacked, at the moment, sufficient knowledge of the subject which that next volume was to embrace. Or else, as also happened at times, his fancy or his feelings or some combination of circumstances carried him onward, inducing him to skip a volume for a time. But he always reverted to it afterwards, like an author who, writing not twenty volumes, but one, has passed over some troublesome chapter, yet harks back and writes it at last, well knowing that his work will lack completeness and intelligibility if the gap be not filled up.

In the chronicle of Zola's career given in our previous chapters, the Rougon-Macquart volumes have been mentioned in their chronological order; but the example of the critics who, even since the completion of the series, have followed that same order in judging Zola's work is not one to imitate. By adopting that system one may certainly trace the variations in Zola's general style over a term of years; but if the series is to be judged as a whole one must take its sections in the order in which the author himself desired they should be read. This he indicated in "Le Docteur Pascal," and confirmed by word of mouth to the present writer; and it is unfortunate, perhaps, that the French publishers should still "list" the volumes chronologically, thereby leading many readers astray. Some volumes of course — notably the first and the last — occupy their proper places in the lists, but others have to be taken in a very different order.

Before passing the series in review one may say a few words respecting the two names, Rougon and Macquart, which, linked together, have supplied it with a general title. Some years ago those names were noticed by the present writer in sundry old documents relating to an abbey in Champagne, but Zola declared them to be common names in Provence. As for Macquart — long familiar to Parisians in connection with the knacker's trade — it is a suggestive circumstance that in Zola's younger days there was a bookseller at Aix, named Makaire, whom he may well have known. Makaire, of course is merely a variant of Macaire; and it is not necessary to be familiar with the famous "Auberge des Adrets," and the wonderful impersonation of Frédérick Lemaître, to know that "Robert Macaire" is regarded by the French as a type of braggart rascal, as cynical, as impudent as "Tartuffe" is hypocritical and sneakish. Zola, then, in the writer's opinion, adopted that vulgar name Macquart because it resembled Macaire, and put Rougon before it in lieu of Robert. He pictured the Rougon-Macquarts as the Robert-Macaires of the Second Empire, and the idea came to him, perhaps, the more readily as Napoleon III. had been repeatedly caricatured as Robert Macaire, a brazen knave repeating *abracadabrant* axioms amid the applause of his followers. Thus the title of the Rougon-Macquarts, if taken as synonymous with the Robert-Macaires, will suffice to explain a good deal of Zola's series.

Let us now glance at the volumes. In "La Fortune des Rougon" (I) the author describes the origin of the Rougons and the Macquarts. One Adélaïde Fouque, a woman of hysterical nature who eventually goes mad, — a variety of disorders being transmitted to most of her descendants, — marries a man named Rougon, and on his death lives with another named Macquart. By the former she has a son, Pierre Rougon; by the latter a son, Antoine, and a daughter, Ursule Macquart. This daughter marries a hatter named Mouret, and thus at the outset of the series the second generation of the family is shown divided into three branches. In the third generation it increases to eleven members; in the fourth to thirteen. In the fifth it dwindles, its vitiated energies now being largely spent; and though there are indications of its continuance in sundry children who do not appear on the scene, the hope of regeneration rests virtually in only one child, a boy three months old when the curtain finally descends. In "La Fortune des Rougon," then, we are shown old Adélaïde Fouque, her children and some of theirs, all more or less poverty-stricken and striving for wealth, which comes with the foundation of the Second Empire. The scene is laid at Plassans — Aix, as was formerly explained — and one sees the Imperial *régime* established there by craft and bloodshed.

Next comes "Son Excellence Eugène Rougon" (II) which carries one to Paris, where the fortunes of the eldest of the Rougon brothers, first an advocate and at last an all-powerful minister of state, are followed in official and political circles. The court of Napoleon III appears at the Tuileries and at Compiègne, where one meets, among others, a beautiful Italian adventuress, Clorinde Balbi — suggestive of the notorious Countess de Castiglione — with a mother reminiscent of Madame de Montijo. And in other chapters of the volume the scheming and plotting of the reign, the official jobbery and corruption, are traced for several years.

"La Curée" (III) follows, and one turns to Eugène Rougon's younger brother, Aristide, who has assumed the pseudonym of Saccard. With him the reader joins in the great rush for the spoils of the new *régime*. A passion for money and enjoyment seizes on one and all, debauchery reigns in society, and a fever of reckless speculation is kindled by the transformation of Paris under Baron Haussmann and his acolytes. Men and women sell themselves. Renée, Saccard's second wife, passes from mere adultery to incest, becoming a modern Phædra, while Saccard himself leads the life of an eager, gluttonous bird of prey, which he continues in the ensuing volume, "L'Argent" (IV), where the Bourse — the money-market — is shown with all its gambling, its thousand tricks and frauds.

So far the series might seem a mere record of roguery, vice, and corruption, but those who know the books are aware that such is not the case. Silvère and Miette stand for love and all the better qualities of humanity in the first volume; there are at least the Martinots and the Berauds in the second and third; and the devoted Madame Caroline, the honest Hamelin, the pious Princess d'Orviedo, the dreamy, generous-hearted Sigismond, the loving Jordans, and the unfortunate Mazaud, all figure in the fourth, amid the scramble for gold in which the other characters participate.

In sharp contrast with that greed for gain is the picture offered by the next volume, "Le Rêve" (V), where an immaculate lily arises from the hot-bed of vice, whence later, and as a further contrast, a type of foul shamelessness,

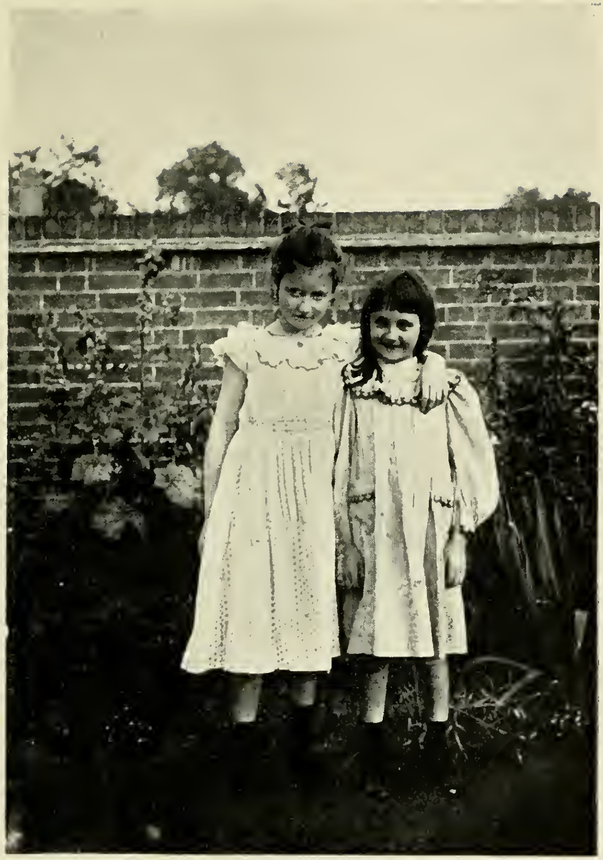


Photo by Émile Zola

Denise and Jacques

Nana, the harlot, is also to spring. But it is best not to anticipate. In the first four volumes the Rougons, under the influence of heredity and surroundings, have shown themselves scoundrels, whereas in Angélique, the heroine of "Le Rêve," a girl of their blood appears who is all purity and candour. She comes upon the scene, precisely at this moment, to emphasise the author's conviction that, whatever he may have had to depict in his solicitude for truth, all is not vice, degradation, and materialism, that there are other aspirations in life besides the thirst for wealth, enjoyment and power. And here, too, the priesthood is shown in its better aspect: the good Abbé Cornille, the proud, heartbroken Bishop d'Hautecœur, in contrast with whom the scheming, unscrupulous Abbé Faujas appears in the next section of the series.

This is "La Conquête de Plassans" (VI) which retains one in the provinces (whither one is carried from Paris in "Le Rêve"), and one is confronted by a carefully painted picture of middle-class society in a small town, this in its turn contrasting with the previous pictures of life in Paris. And now the baleful results which may attend marriages between cousins are exemplified. Marthe Rougon has married François Mouret, and both have inherited lesions from their common ancestress, Adélaïde Fouque. One of their children, Désirée, physically strong and healthy, is mentally an "innocent"; and they themselves are unhinged, the workings of their heredity being accentuated and hastened by the wiles of Faujas, the priest, who gains access to their home. He is a secret agent of the imperial government, and thus one again sees the Empire at work in the provinces, utilising the clergy to enforce its authority, and as often as not betrayed by it. In the end all collapses. The maddened Mouret sets fire to his home and perishes in the flames with Abbé Faujas, while Marthe dies of a disorder springing from her inherited hysteria.

Then, the middle class of the provinces having been sketched, that of the metropolis is depicted with an unsparing hand. The career of the Mourets' eldest son, Octave, is followed, first through the pages of "Pot-Bouille" (VII), in which he appears as a kind of modern Don Juan, a Don Juan stripped of all poetry, all glamour, a sensualist of our great cities, the man who prowls, not among the unhappy creatures of the streets, but among the women of outward respectability who may help him to acquire position and fortune. The scene is laid in a house of the Rue de Choiseul, in the centre of Paris; and all around Octave gravitate depraved, venal, egotistical, and sickly beings, adulterous households, unscrupulous match-making mothers, *demi-vierges* who will only marry for money, dowry hunters, slatternly servant girls, and that type of the middle-class debauchee who makes those girls his prey. And the pleasing figures in the work are few — poor old Josserand, for instance, and the charming Madame Hédouin, with the prosperous author on the first floor, who drives in his carriage and has two handsome children. At the same time the book pours a stream of light first on all the ignoble shifts to which middle-class folk of small means are put in their insane endeavours to ape their wealthier neighbours, and secondly on the evils that arise from that dowry system which superficial people regard as proving the foresight and wisdom of the French when they embark on the sea of matrimony. As a matter of fact, it frequently happens that this dowry system entirely blights married life. As often as not the dowry itself is a mere snare and delusion — the bride's parents retaining the principal, and merely serving the interest until their death, when, as in the case of Zola's old Vabre, the parental fortune may have entirely disappeared!

In "Au Bonheur des Dames" (VIII) Octave Mouret appears again, a sensualist still but also a man of enterprise, at the head of a "Grand Magasin de Nouveautés," a Temple of Temptation, which revolutionises trade and panders to the feminine love of finery. Here the *bourgeoisie* is shown elbowing the class immediately below it, a world of *employés*, clerks, shopmen and shop-girls, whose lives, likewise, are full of evil. But again a girl of admirable rectitude, Denise Baudu, comes forward to illumine the novelist's pages, and redeem and ennoble the man who has hitherto regarded her sex as an instrument or a toy.

When Zola has cast Octave Mouret at the feet of Denise, thereby exemplifying a pure woman's influence over man, he again transfers his scene from bustling Paris to a lonely region of the southern provinces, there to follow the career of Octave's brother, Serge. In "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret" (IX) the battle is again one between woman, love, and man; but a new factor appears — religion — for Serge is a priest, bound by the unnatural vow of his calling, one of hysterical, mystical temperament also, enslaved by the superstitions of his creed. In his tumble-down parsonage and his little, decaying, forsaken church, amid a semi-savage, brutish peasantry, he long strives to resist the cry of nature. But she at last asserts her might, and the novelist carries the reader into the enchanted garden of the Paradou, where love reigns supreme. Yet the golden hours are brief: the priest is recalled to his religion of death, and he cannot resist the call, for all the training of years which has confirmed and increased his mystical tendency comes back, and he is helpless. Thus the natural life is forsaken for the illusions and dogmas of a creed; and Albine, whom Serge has loved, is left forlorn with her unborn babe, to lie down and die amid the perfume of the flowers with which she has strewn her bed. Serge it is who casts the symbolical pinch of earth upon her coffin, for he has resumed his ministry among the brutish peasants, dedicating all his efforts to slay the sex given him by his God, for instead of living as a man he must obey the command of his Church and live as an eunuch.

After that battle with nature and love, there comes a companion picture: the fall of Hélène Mouret in "Une Page d'Amour" (X). She has hitherto led an absolutely blameless life, but a sudden passion sweeps her off her feet. A tragic sombreness attends the episode. No glamour is cast over woman's frailty in Zola's pages. If Hélène tastes an hour of intoxication she is punished for it as frightfully as any moralist could desire. Jeanne, her fondly loved daughter, who is devoured by jealous hysteria, dies as the result of her lapse; and it is only afterwards, in pity as it were, that Hélène is granted the chance of beginning her life afresh.

Then the series continues. All the Rougons — excepting one, Pascal, whom the novelist keeps back till the end — have now been dealt with, the Mourets also, and the chronicle of the bastard Macquart branch begins. Antoine Macquart has three children, Lisa, Gervaise, and Jean, and it is Lisa who supplies the next volume of the series, "Le Ventre de Paris" (XI), which carries one through and around the great markets of the French metropolis, as well as into the fine pork-butcher's shop, which Lisa keeps with her husband, Quenu. This is a volume redolent of victuals certainly, marked also by the egotism of the shopkeeping and petty trading classes, with yet a glimpse of one of those conspiracies which were frequent in the time of Napoleon III, and a backward glance at the *coup d'état* by which that sovereign had risen to power. The chief figure in the story is Quenu's brother, the unhappy Florent, who has escaped from Cayenne, and whom Lisa, that comfortable egotist, ends by betraying to the authorities. For that ultra-righteous deed, — counselled by Lisa's confessor, — and for the savagery of all the fat fishwives, one is consoled by the presence of honest Madame François and of Cadine, the little flower-girl, and Marjolin, her youthful lover, whose smile brightens many a page.

Then, in "La Joie de Vivre" (XII), comes Pauline, whose nature is so different from that of her mother, Lisa. She has no egotism in her composition; she would never betray anybody; she is all human devotion and self-sacrifice. With her we are carried to the seashore, to a little fisher hamlet, where her guardian Chanteau dwells; and he, his wife, and his son prey upon her, wrecking her life, though she remains brave and smiling till the end. And how little joy there may be in life is shown not only by her case, but by that of the crippled Chanteau, his embittered, covetous, suspicious wife, his jealous servant, and his weak-minded son, who tries to be this and that, but succeeds in nothing and is consumed by a foolish, unreasoning dread of death. It is to these that Pauline has to minister, for these that she has to sacrifice herself, even as it often happens that the good have to lay down their lives for the unworthy.

Pauline, one has said, is very different from her mother, Lisa. Equally different is Lisa's sister, Gervaise, the pathetic heroine of "L'Assommoir" (XIII), with which the family chronicle is continued. Lisa rises, Gervaise falls; so does it happen in many of the world's families. Zola has now descended through several strata of society, and has come to the working classes. A deep pathos lies beneath the picture he traces of them under the bane of drink. At first Gervaise appears so courageous amid her misfortunes that one can readily grant her the compassionate sympathy accorded to every trusting woman whom a coward abandons. There seems hope for her at the outset of her marriage with Coupeau; a possibility, too, that she may prove successful when, industrious and energetic, she starts her little laundry business. But her husband's lazy, drunken ways recoil on her, the return of the rascally Lantier completes her misfortune, and then she rolls down hill, to die at last of starvation. The stage of "L'Assommoir" is crowded with typical figures, some of them perchance imperishable, for their names have passed into the French language to serve as designations for one and another degraded character that one encounters in every-day life. Yet all the personages of Zola's work are not depraved. Even in this dark book there are a few who point to the brighter side of human nature, honest Goujet, for instance, and Lalie, the poor, pitiful "little mother." Gervaise and Coupeau themselves are not wholly vile. In the midst of their degradation, when she prowls the boulevard in the snow, when he is dancing madly in his padded cell, one instinctively retraces their careers back to the early days when both had looked so hopefully on life; and one recognises that a fatal environment, more than natural worthlessness, has been the great cause of their downfall.

Nana already appears — in her childhood and her youth — in the pages of "L'Assommoir," but Zola does not pass direct from that work to the later career of Gervaise's daughter. He first takes Gervaise's elder children, her sons by Lantier; and "L'Œuvre" (XIV) unfolds the painful story of Claude, the painter, a glimpse of whom has been given previously in "Le Ventre de Paris." Again in "L'Œuvre," one finds a record of downfall, but, whereas in "L'Assommoir" it has largely resulted from environment and circumstances, it now proceeds more directly from an evil heredity. Claude stands virtually on the border line that parts insanity from genius, and thus in his career, the old hypotheses of Moreau of Tours, and those subsequently enunciated in England by Nesbit, might find play. In the end, after a life of conflict and misery, insanity triumphs and Claude destroys himself. His tale, as one has stated previously, is linked with a picture of the French art-world. Fortunately a current of human interest flows through the book, for beside Claude the unhappy Christine, his wife, appears: she, like Gervaise, at first being a good, true, and courageous woman, one who commits the irremediable mistake of linking her life with that of a man fated to failure and insanity.

In these last sections of Zola's series the march of degenerescence is hastened; downfall follows downfall; before long that of individuals is to be succeeded by a supreme collapse, that of the *régime* under which they live. Thus, after "L'Œuvre," comes "La Bête Humaine" (XV), Claude's brother Jacques, an engine-driver, in whom a murderer appears among the Rougon-Macquarts. The hereditary virus, transmitted from Adélaïde Fouque, has turned in him to an insensate craving for woman's blood, and, frankly, his story is horrible. At the same time, while one follows the growth of his abominable disease, many a vivid page arrests attention: awful, yet a masterpiece of colloquial narrative and full of a penetrating psychology, is Severine's account of the murder of President Grandmorin; very human is Jacques' love for his engine, La Lison; and striking are the pictures of the snowstorm, the railway accident, and the death of Jacques and the stoker Pecqueux, at the end of the volume, when their train, crowded with soldiers, is seen rushing driverless, like some great, maddened, blind beast, towards catastrophe and annihilation.

Next the story of Gervaise's third son, Étienne, is unfolded in "Germinal" (XVI), this again a tale of the workers, the hardships, the misery, the degradation of the sweated toilers of the coal-pits, who are maddened by want to revolt. And then, of course, they are shot down by the soldiers at the disposal of the capitalists who batten on the sufferings of labour. A tribute of compassion, a call for justice, a cry of warning to the rich and powerful — such, as Zola himself said, is "Germinal." Those who wonder at the hatred of the workers for those above them, at the spread of socialism throughout France, need merely read his pages to understand why and how such things have come to pass.

But "Nana" (XVII) now confronts the reader. He has just passed through the world of labour: drunkenness, degradation, insanity, crime, revolution have been indicated successively as resultants of the condition of the masses; and here comes another product of an evil social system, the low-born harlot who, like an unconscious instrument of retribution, ascends from her native dung-heap to poison the *bourgeoisie* and aristocracy — the rulers, the law-givers, to whom the existence of that dung-heap and its evil ferments is due. In "Nana" depravity coruscates. Here is the so-called "life of pleasure" of the world's great cities, the life of indulgence which recruits its votaries among all the aristocracies, all the plutocracies, all the *bourgeoisies*, all the bohemias. To some, Nana may seem to be "a scourge of God" — assuredly the world's Nanas have wrought more evil than its Attilas — "a punishment on men for their lewd and lawless sensuality." In Zola's pages one does not witness merely the ruin and disgrace of the professedly profligate; one sees also how natural, youthful desire when exposed to temptation may ripen into depravity and end in misery. One sees, again, the reflex action of libertinism on married life — how wives end at times by following the example of their husbands, and even "bettering the instruction."[1] From first to last this much-maligned book is a stupendous warning for both sexes, as great a denunciation of the social evil as ever was penned.

But the scene changes, and in "La Terre" (XVIII) appears Jean Macquart, soldier and artisan, who becomes a peasant. He, though a brother of Gervaise, has escaped the hereditary taint, is strong, sensible, hardworking, a man destined, one might think, to a life of useful and happy obscurity. But fate casts him among the Fouans, a family of untutored peasants, barely raised above animality; and a drama of savage greed and egotism is unfolded around him. Old Fouan, being no longer able to till his fields himself, divides his property among his children, who agree to make him an allowance. But he is cheated, ill-treated, robbed of his savings by them, and finally murdered by one of his sons. That same son, Buteau, is consumed by a ravenous earth-hunger, but animal desire is also strong within him. He is both enamoured and jealous of his wife's sister, Françoise, who is Jean Macquart's wife, his passion for her being blended with a craving to appropriate her land. At last she, by violence, becomes his victim, and in a struggle with her sister, who is present, is thrown upon a scythe and mortally injured. That crime is witnessed by old Fouan, and it is for fear lest he should reveal it that he is stifled — then burnt.

---

[1] See a clever study of "Nana," by H. Schutz-Wilson in the "New Century Review," Vol. V, No. 26, February, 1899.

From "La Terre" Jean Macquart passes to "La Débâcle" (XIX), for the time has now come for the great smash-up of that Empire all tinsel without and all rottenness within. War and invasion descend upon France. You follow the retreating soldiers from the Rhine to the Meuse, on that terrible, woeful march to Sedan, where all becomes disaster. You see the wretched Emperor borne along in the baggage train of his army, carried, it was thought, to certain death in the hope that France might then forgive, and allow his son to reign. And you see him under fire, vainly courting death, which will not take him. Then the horrors of Bazeilles, the struggle for the Calvary, the great charge, the hoisting of the white flag, the truce, and the abject surrender follow in swift succession. Next comes the battlefield after the slaughter, with the dreadful Camp of Misery, and later, the efforts of the National Defence, the peace imposed on the vanquished, and then the Commune's horrors crowning all. But from first to last human interest is never absent: one finds it in the friendship of Jean for the unlucky and degenerate Maurice, in the story of Silvine and Prosper, in the bravery of Weiss, the heroism of Henriette, Jean's love for her, and the hope that both, hereafter, may be able to begin life afresh and together, a hope which is blasted by the fatality of civil war, when brother rushes on brother and blindly slays him.

At last comes "Le Docteur Pascal" (XX), the zealous scientist who sits in judgment on his family. You see him among his documents, sifting evidence, explaining the heredity of one and another relative, expounding the whole theory of atavism which underlies Zola's series. The old ancestress, Adélaïde Fouque, is still alive, a centenarian, mad, confined for many years in a lunatic asylum. Her son, Antoine Macquart, also survives, still an unscrupulous knave and a confirmed drunkard, until spontaneous combustion destroys him, while hemorrhage carries off little Charles, the last delicate, degenerate scion of the exhausted stock. Pascal himself would seem to have escaped the hereditary taint; but after a long life of celibacy, spent in the study and practice of medicine, his passions awaken, and he falls in love with Clotilde, his niece. He strives to overcome that passion, he wishes to marry the girl to his friend Ramond, but she will not have it so, and in her turn becomes a temptress. Then the impetuous blood of the Rougons masters them both, and they fall into each other's arms. Previously, old Madame Félicité, Pascal's mother, has tried to use Clotilde as an instrument to effect the destruction of the documents which the doctor has collected, for the family would be dishonoured should they ever see the light. The girl has also tried to convert Pascal to her own religious views; but all in vain. A period of delirious folly ensues, Pascal turns prodigal in his old age, and is at last brought to ruin by a dishonest notary. Then Clotilde and he have to part, and he dies, struck down by heart disease. The young woman survives with a child, his son and hers, who, perhaps, may yet rejuvenate the dwindling race. And we see her nursing her babe and indulging in a thousand hopes, as the curtain at last descends on the history of the Rougon-Macquarts.[1]

Such, then, is Zola's great series: one work in twenty volumes, in whose pages appear twelve hundred human characters besides many others, such as La Lison, the engine which Jacques Lantier worships and which seems to be endowed with life; such, too, as old Bonhomme, Pascal's horse; Bataille and Trompette, the horses of the coal-pit; Zephyr, who falls in the great cavalry charge at Sedan; Mathieu and Bertrand, the two big dogs; Pologne, the unlucky rabbit; Minouche, the egotistical cat; Gédéon, the comical donkey who gets drunk in the vintage scene of "La Terre"; César, the great bull at La Borderie; La Coliche and her calves; Mathieu, Désirée's pig; Alexandre, her big lusty rooster, and a score of others. Zola always loved animals; he put them into his books, and they entered largely into his life. As for the human characters of his great series these are of all classes, all kinds. Napoleon III appears in various volumes, at the Tuileries, at Compiègne, at St. Cloud, and again and again during the war of 1870. The Empress is seen also, like the Duke de Morny and other high personages of state. Members of one and another aristocracy, politicians and functionaries, judges and lawyers, medical men and other scientists, bishops and priests, generals and soldiers, company promoters, speculators and shareholders, schoolmasters and revolutionaries, *bourgeois* of Paris and the provinces, artists and shopkeepers, street hawkers, peasants and miners, workmen of innumerable callings, pass across Zola's stage. The reader enters the homes of all those classes; he goes from the palace to the hovel, from the dancing-hall to the coal-pit, from the cathedral to the boozing-ken, from the artist's studio to the Chamber of Deputies, from the great drapery shop to the harlot's boudoir; he sees Paris, her boulevards, her slums, her promenades, her theatres, her quays, under twenty different aspects, at dawn, at noon, at night, in shine and rain and snow; he travels to the rocky shore of a boisterous and predatory sea; he finds fairyland in the magic garden of the Paradou; he roams the bleak coal country of the north; he is buffeted by the mistral and scorched by the blazing sun of Provence; he gazes on La Beauce, an ocean of waving corn, and on the battlefield of Sedan, strewn with the dead and dying. Religion, politics, sociology, art, science, trade, agriculture, military affairs, life's characteristics, duties, functions, errors and aims, love, marriage, eating, drinking, and a hundred other matters are discussed before him. Beautiful friendships, confiding loves, ardent passions, terrible jealousies and rivalries, lofty aspirations, horrid lusts, generous sacrifices, deeds of bravery and virtue, cruelty and vengeance, greed, craft, and cowardice, — in a word, both the nobility and the mire of life in turn confront one, in such wise that this Rougon-Macquart series is like a miniature world.

---

[1] In our summary of the novels we have left the scientific questions on one side. It would be impossible to deal with them adequately here, and those who are curious on the subject must consult "Le Docteur Pascal," from which we venture to quote just one paragraph, which indicates Zola's views in a general way: "We see that human creatures may appear radically different one from another, though they merely typify so many logical modifications of their common ancestors. The trunk explains the branches, and the branches explain the leaves. Although Saccard and Eugène Rougon differ so much in temperament and mode of life, the same impulsion produced the former's ravenous appetites and the latter's sovereign ambition. Angélique, a spotless lily, came from an equivocal creature like Sidonie, for the same influence determines either mysticism or sexual passion according to environment. In the case of Mouret's children the inspiration makes an intelligent man like Octave a millionaire dealer in finery, causes Serge, a believer, to become a poor priest, while Désirée, a witless creature, develops into a physically handsome and happy girl. . . . But the neurosis passes to Gervaise's children, and Nana sells herself, Étienne rebels, Jacques murders, and Claude is endowed with a measure of genius; while Pauline, their cousin-german, becomes a personification of victorious rectitude, a battling and self-sacrificing woman. That is heredity, life itself, which produces imbeciles, madmen, criminals, and great men. Certain cells collapse, others take their place, and a rascal or a raving lunatic appears instead of a genius or a mere honest man. And meantime mankind continues rolling onward, carrying all along with it."

It has been previously shown that Zola began to study and plan the series in the middle of 1868, and commenced his first volume in May, 1869. For some seven or eight months, during the war of 1870–1871, he had been obliged to set his work aside, but apart from that break it had occupied the greater part of his attention during all the years that elapsed until "Le Docteur Pascal" appeared in 1893. Every year, as a rule, some months were occupied in framing a new volume, then several were given to the actual writing of it. In the first instance it was usually necessary to visit places and people; and in some cases certain branches of the chosen subject had to be studied in books, chiefly of a technical nature. This brings one to the consideration of a legend which has grown up around Zola and much of his work. It has been assumed, and repeated *ad nauseam*, by some critics, that he was a very ignorant man with little or no real experience of life, one who, aided by a little imagination, concocted his books out of others, basing his narratives entirely on printed documents. But that assumption is fallacious. It was helped on, certainly, by some of Zola's friends, notably by Paul Alexis, who in his account of the earlier Rougon-Macquart volumes expatiated at length on some of the novelist's sources of information.[1] This Alexis did with Zola's sanction, in a spirit of literary honesty, but his insistence on the subject perverted the judgment of several critics, in such wise that Zola has been largely described as a writer who acquired his information merely by cramming. That such a view of the man and his work is erroneous may be easily shown.

He certainly had to study certain subjects in books, and rely, occasionally, on information given him by friends, but few writers ever put more actual experience and personal knowledge into their works. Even his original acquaintance with "society" was more considerable than some have admitted. In Michelet's drawing-room, which was the first he frequented, he met, it is true, only serious men, while Flaubert's was but a superlative Bohemia; but in Madame Meurice's *salon*, to which, whatever his poverty, he had his *entrée* during the last years of the Empire, he found not only republicanism and literary culture, but many of the graces of life, a high standard of comfort if not luxury, charming women who added a touch of pleasant frivolity to the serious talk of the older men, and young fellows in good circumstances, whose minds were more intent on amusement than politics or literature or art. After the Empire his favourite *salon* became for a time that of Madame Charpentier, a lady of culture, whose circle of acquaintance extended far beyond literary men and their wives. Among the former, be it noted, were academicians, but there were also statesmen, — Gambetta, Jules Ferry, and numerous others, with many people who, in one way or another, represented the new Republican society. Another drawing-room of high standing in Republican Paris which Zola frequented, was that of Madame Menard-Dorian.

---

[1] The writer must plead guilty to having unintentionally assisted the growth of the legend by insisting often unduly on some of Zola's "quellen," in his introductions to the English translations of the novelist's books.

Besides, his experiences during the Franco-German war, when he became secretary to Glais-Bizoin, his participation in newspaper life, his position as parliamentary correspondent to "La Cloche," as general Paris correspondent of "Le Sémaphore" of Marseilles, made him acquainted with scores of people, instructed him in a hundred different ways. Further, his dramatic efforts brought him in contact with the stage; his artistic friendships carried him among painters, sculptors, and their critics; his intercourse with the Goncourts led him occasionally into peculiar company, like that of Nina de Villars, and other semi-literary women of questionable repute; the dinner parties with the Goncourts, Flaubert, and Daudet took him to restaurants and cafés where he elbowed the flash set; and we know also that the circumstances of his early manhood had brought him in touch with the poor. Finally, it is obvious that his actual experience of the emotions was large: he had known sorrow in many forms; the pangs that come from defeat and contumely, the gloom which hope deferred casts over the spirit, followed by the delight which arises at an unexpected success. No doubt, when he first planned "Les Rougon Macquart," in 1868, he was still very imperfectly equipped for his selected task; and the fact that he should have attempted it under such circumstances shows that he possessed more than the usual amount of confidence that a young man usually places in his powers. But his experiences during the next four or five years altered everything, for they greatly increased his equipment and rendered the successful prosecution of his task a possibility.

Each time he turned to a fresh volume of his series he began by preparing an *ébauche*, or as he generally preferred to say in his letters, a *maquette*, that is a rough model of the intended work. The Rougon or the Macquart who was to figure most prominently in it had been previously chosen; he knew what was to be that character's environment, and the philosophical idea which was to govern the volume. Taking his pen in hand, he now pictured such secondary characters as the proposed *milieu* suggested, and set down such facts and incidents as might logically ensue from the chosen characters and their surroundings. Briefly, in a broad and somewhat vague way, he built up a subject. Those general notes having been placed in a portfolio by themselves he next took his characters in hand, one by one, noting their respective histories, ages, health, physical appearance and nature, disposition, habits, and associations. That work having been completed was placed in a second portfolio, and Zola next passed to the question of environment, collecting a variety of information respecting the different localities where the scenes of his narrative were to be laid. Next he started an inquiry into the professions or trades of his characters, and such other technical matters as might be useful to him, and his notes on those subjects were also gathered together in portfolios. They were often based on personal observation, but naturally enough Zola consulted technical works and friends whom he knew to be well informed on certain points. Their letters and quotations from the books he had consulted were added to his personal memoranda.

By the time all this was done his materials were often in excess of what he required. Nevertheless he based himself upon them in planning his book. He decided on the number of chapters the volume should contain, and distributed the materials among them. This entailed much minute labour. For instance, he took his first rough draft of his subject, and distributed the principal incidents mentioned in it among the proposed chapters; then he took his notes on his characters and apportioned them in a similar manner; in one chapter, for instance, the appearance of some individual must be described; in another some particular characteristic must be brought to the front; in yet another the changes effected in the same personage by environment or other causes must be dealt with. Thus borrowing notes from one and another of his first portfolios, and distributing them as the narrative and its situations might suggest, Zola gradually planned his chapters from the first to the last.

All this was still rough work, and before committing a chapter to paper, Zola re-examined his materials, set them in what seemed the best order, both with respect to what he might have said in previous chapters and with respect to the effect he desired to produce in the new one. Now and again he would find some note superfluous, and reject it altogether; at other times he might transfer it to a subsequent chapter, where the fact, incident, problem, or theory it enunciated would have a more logical place. Moreover, while he was writing, it occasionally occurred to him that some incident he was describing, or some remark he attributed to one of his characters, would have a certain effect farther on; and thereupon he at once made a note of the circumstance, and, his chapter finished, transferred all such notes to their proper places. "It will be seen," says Alexis, from whom these particulars have been borrowed,[1] "that this method of proceeding from the general to the special is complicated, but logical and safe. A friend of Zola's (M. Bruneau ?) told me that it reminded him of Wagner's learned and novel orchestration. I do not know how far that comparison may be accurate; but it is certain that Zola's works, when read for the first time by the profane, must have a little of the disconcerting effect of the Wagnerian operas. The first impression is one of great confusion; the reader is on the point of exclaiming that there is no sign of composition or rule; but on penetrating to the structure of the work you find that everything is mathematical; you discover a deep science, and recognise that the outcome is really the result of prolonged labour fraught with strenuous patience and determination."

Edmondo de Amicis, in an appreciation of Zola, included in his "Recollections of Paris," mentions that the novelist showed him a number of notes he had prepared for "L'Assommoir," and as Amicis's account of them throws light on Zola's methods of work, a quotation from his pages may be added to the particulars taken from Alexis.

---

[1] Alexis, *l. c.*, pp. 163–166.

"On the first sheets of paper were sketches of the personages, notes about their appearance, temperament, and character. I found the *miroirs caracteristiques* of Gervaise, Coupeau, Mother Coupeau, the Lorilleux, the Boches, Goujet, and Madame Lerat. All the figures of the book were there. The notes were laconic, like those of a court registrar, but free like those of a novelist, and sprinkled with short arguments, such as this: 'Born under those circumstances, educated in that manner, he must conduct himself in such or such a way.' In one place was the query: 'What else can a rascal of this stamp do?' . . . I was struck by a sketch of Lantier's character, which was nothing but a string of adjectives, each stronger than the other, such as 'gross, sensual, brutal, egotistical, smutty.' In some places appeared the words: 'Use So and So,' meaning somebody known to the author. And the whole was penned in proper sequence in a large, clear handwriting. Then I saw sketches of places outlined in ink, and as accurate as the drawings of an engineer. There were a number. The whole book was drawn: the streets of the district in which the plot was laid, with their corners and indications of their shops; the zigzags which Gervaise made to avoid her creditors, the direction taken by Nana in her Sunday escapades, the tipplers' peregrinations from music-hall to boozing-ken, and the hospital and slaughter-house, between which one terrible evening the poor ironing woman went maddened by hunger. Then Marescot's big house was drawn in minute detail; there was the whole of the top floor with the landings, the windows, the mute's den, old Bru's hole — all those dark passages in which one detected the gasp of death, those walls which resounded as if only empty paunches were within, those doors through which came an everlasting music of blows and the cries of little ones dying from starvation. There was also a plan of Gervaise's shop and home, room by room, with indications of the beds and tables, and here and there erasures and corrections, which suggested that Zola had amused himself by the hour, perhaps quite forgetting his story, immersed in his creation as if it were something he actually remembered. On other pages were notes of various kinds. I recollect two particularly — 'twenty pages of description of such a thing, twelve pages of description of such a scene, to be divided into three parts.' One could divine that Zola had the description in his head, formulated before it was set on paper; that he could hear it resounding rhythmically within him, like music which only lacked words. This system of working with the compasses, as it were, even at things of the imagination, is not so rare as some may imagine. Zola, for his part, is a great mechanic. One can see how his descriptions proceed, symmetrically, spaced out, separated at times by some padding to give the reader breathing time, and divided into almost equal sections, like that of the flowers of the Paradou in 'La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret,' that of the thunder storm in 'Une Page d'Amour,' and that of the death of Coupeau in 'L'Assommoir.' One might say that for his mind to work at ease it is necessary Zola should first trace the precise limits of his work, know exactly at what points he may rest, and what will be the extent and aspect of his work when printed. When his materials are too large he cuts them down in order to get them within those limits; when they are small he makes an effort to spin them out to the allotted point. He has an unconquerable passion for due proportions which may occasionally tend to prolixity, but which frequently, by compelling his mind to dwell on his subject, renders his work deeper, more complete."

Zola's books were written on small, unruled quarto paper, almost invariably of a very stout quality and highly glazed. Though his handwriting was large and bold he did not use a quill like Hugo and others, but the French equivalent of the J pen, and for some thirty years he invariably employed the same thick ivory holder, so heavy a one that the present writer, who had occasion to use it now and again when Zola was in England, could not help remarking that the hand might well feel tired after carrying it to paper for three or four successive hours. But with Zola it was a question of habit; he could hardly write at all unless he had a weight of nearly three ounces in his hand, and he would be in quite a state of distress if an urgent letter had to be written and he lacked his usual implement.

The script of his books was as a rule beautifully clear and open. On each slip he left a margin about two-thirds of an inch in width; his lines, on an average one and twenty per slip, were very straight and regular. The general character of his handwriting is shown by the fac-simile of a letter given in this volume, the concluding portion being more like his book "copy," for on the first page the script is rather smaller than usual. It will be noticed that the writing is of a distinctly personal character. On consulting a large number of autographs we have found little like it, but the disconnected letters and syllables recall the writing of Boileau, Chateaubriand, Michelet, Jules Janin, and Victor Hugo. Some specimens from Hugo's pen seem to indicate that if, instead of a sloping, he had written an upright hand, it might well have resembled Zola's. The latter, it may be remarked, never departed from his upright hand, whereas in autographs of some French authors — Dumas *père* and George Sand, for instance — one finds now an upright and now a sloping writing, the former being used in formal letters, the latter in notes to intimate friends, when the writers were not *en représentation*, but allowed their feelings full play. In Zola's case the upright hand appears in the most intimate letters as well as in his "copy" for the press, and thus it would seem to have been with him a natural, not an artificial, writing. One may add, without asserting any particular faith in graphology, that on applying its rules, without prejudice, to Zola's writing, the latter will be found to indicate despotivity, stubbornness, insight, and orderliness, combined with poetry. Perhaps, then, there may be some truth in that alleged science.

Here and there in Zola's book "copy" one finds words crossed out with double lines, and there are some interlinear corrections, with occasionally a marginal addition, but these alterations are surprisingly few. If one judged Zola by his manuscripts only, one would take him to be a man who wrote *au courant de la plume*, without the slightest effort. But should his manuscripts ever be open to public inspection[1] it will be found that they differ largely from his printed works. His proof corrections were most extensive, whole sheets of his first proofs were sometimes cut to pieces, and numerous additional corrections and alterations appeared in his first revises. It was from second revises that the translations of his books were usually made, but further corrections often ensued. One has not yet reached his novel "Paris," nevertheless one may mention here that he modified the names of several characters in it at the last moment, altering Harn to Harth, Duthil to Dutheil, Sagnier to Sanier, and so forth; and as, amid the great rush of the

---

[1] He was exceedingly jealous about them. The present writer has had a few in his possession, on trust, but always had to return them. There may be some early manuscripts of short stories in Russia, and a few similar ones in the possession of French collectors; but, as a rule, Zola insisted on the return of his "copy," and nearly the whole of it was in his possession when he died. As for the first proofs bearing his numerous corrections he repeatedly stated that almost all of them were destroyed. The writer has some revises containing occasional corrections, usually in the handwriting of Madame Zola.

Dreyfus affair, he forgot to send any warning of what he had done, the English version appeared with the names unaltered. It may be added that Zola always welcomed suggestion and correction. The writer pointed out to him that two characters in "La Débâcle" had the same Christian names, and that some confusion might arise respecting them. Forthwith — in this case also at the last moment — he altered one of the names, delaying the printing of the book for some days in order that the correction might be made. Again, on reading the proofs of "Rome" the writer detected a few topographical errors and called attention to them. Zola consulted his plans of the city and, finding he had erred, altered what he had written, at the same time requesting his translator to point out any further slips he might notice. Those were trifling matters, and are only mentioned here as instances of Zola's desire to make his books as perfect as possible.

Naturally enough, they contain some blunders. For instance, Zola was in error when, at the outset of "Son Excellence Eugène Rougon," he pictured an official of the Corps Législatif reading the minutes of a previous sitting, whereas the minutes were always taken as read, for otherwise hours would have been consumed in their perusal. He also erred with respect to the betting odds on a horse in "Nana," which was not surprising, the turf being virtually *terra incognita* to him. Again, — and this was a bad blunder, — in "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret,"[1] he spoke of lizards hatching their eggs on the rocks, instead of depositing them there and leaving them to be hatched by the warmth of the atmosphere. Critics made much of that unfortunate slip, which reminds one of a curious mistake made by Alexandre Dumas *père*, who relates in a novel that the peritonitis (!) of one of his characters was perforated by a sword thrust. Dumas certainly wrote rapidly, at times anyhow; but we must remember that the most painstaking works often fall short of perfection. Mérimée rewrote "Colomba" sixteen times before he sent it to the press; nevertheless several slips have been found in it. Flaubert devoted six years to "Madame Bovary," and yet pictured one of its characters paying another exactly eighty-five francs in two-franc pieces. Briefly, lapses are to be found in the most carefully written books as well as in the best-regulated families.[1]

---

[1] P. 266.

In Zola's short stories, particularly the earlier ones, his style often remains light even when it is most ornate. In the Rougon-Macquart novels, the insistence on a multiplicity of details tends to heaviness. Zola was well aware of it, for as far back as 1884, in conversation with Edmond de Goncourt, Maupassant, Huysmans, Alexis, and an English friend,[2] he said: "I am in the habit of feeling the pulse of the public, and am compelled to say that I notice signs of a reaction against us. . . . Our books will be regarded as heavy, and we cannot hide from ourselves that they are not easy to read. To follow us the reader has to make a determined mental effort." There is no little truth in that remark, but one may add that Zola is easier to read and follow than many of his brother realists. Fifty pages of the pyrotechnics of the Goncourts — the labour connected with which killed the younger one, Jules, as Edmond often acknowledged — may interest the reader, but after a few hundred of them one often feels dizzy and fagged. The brothers Margueritte, who proceeded from the Goncourts, have sometimes carried the passion for literary fireworks even further. Zola was quite unable to read their chief work, "Le Désastre." "I have taken up that book a dozen times," he said one day to the present writer, "but on each occasion, after picking my way through a few pages, I have had to put it down. There is some trick of style in every sentence. One is never allowed a moment's rest. After each of those trials it has seemed to me as if my head would split."

---

[1] We refer farther on to the death of Macquart by spontaneous combustion, in "Le Docteur Pascal."

[2] The last named (Mr. George Moore ?) gave, it seems, an account of this conversation in the "St. James's Gazette," May 13, 1884; and the article was translated and published in Paris. Not having seen the English text, the present writer has followed the French version. It appears that the conversation took place at the house of Edmond de Goncourt, on an occasion when the latter read to his friends his preface to "Chérie," in which he bade farewell to literature.

On another occasion he remarked: "Nothing changes more frequently than the fashion in literary style. That is why so many books, although often not very old, are quite unreadable. Our *décadents* insist on polishing and repolishing their style till their writings become mere jewellery work, which will please nobody a few years hence. I myself dabbled in such work formerly. When it does not run to any great length it amuses one, and it may interest the critic, even please the reader, like something fresh and novel. But the latter soon sickens of it. He does not want to be obliged to cudgel his brain at every sentence."

It is generally held by the critics that the descriptions of Paris appended to each section of "Une Page d'Amour" are among the finest passages to be found in the Rougon-Macquart novels. But the present writer after reperusing them, is inclined to regard their beauty as being somewhat too artificial, too elaborate. One may well prefer the panorama of the quays of Paris in "L'Œuvre," the picture of daybreak at the central markets in "Le Ventre de Paris," the *descente* and the *rentrée* of the workers in "L'Assommoir," and the march of the pitmen in "Germinal." In the former instances the spectacle which Zola sets before the reader has a vividness that leaves a lasting impression; in the latter you are borne along with the crowds which the author has conjured forth, you can see and hear their tramp, the sensation of motion being rendered with a skill which few writers have ever equalled. Further, as a superb example of the horrible blended with the pathetic, one may cite the wonderful description of the death of little Charles, in "Le Docteur Pascal."

"Germinal," "L'Assommoir," "La Débâcle," and "La Terre" are ranked as the four pillars of the Rougon-Macquart series. From a purely literary standpoint the first is superior to the second, because it contains less slang. The use of slang in dialogue is often advisable, even necessary; but in narrative and descriptive passages it is difficult to defend it unless the story be told in the first person by one who habitually speaks slang. Zola had some such idea in writing "L'Assommoir" (which he pictured as a book about the people by one of them), but shrank from carrying it to its logical conclusion, and the result, in a literary sense, was not quite pleasing.[1] However, both "Germinal" and "L'Assommoir" are living books, the greatest their author ever penned.

---

[1] In writing "L'Assommoir" Zola did not merely consult the existing slang dictionaries. The scene of the story was laid at half an hour's walk from his own home. He prowled the whole neighbourhood for weeks, observing and listening; and before he set pen to paper he prepared a little slang lexicon for his own use, one which may some day be published. He kept this com-

Passing to "La Débâcle," this is certainly a wonderfully truthful panorama of war and its horrors, though the psychology of several of its characters is open to criticism. Too many of them lack robustness; they seem too full of nerves to be regarded as typical. In the case of Maurice, a mere degenerate, the picture is accurate enough; but assuredly many feelings which Zola and others have attributed to soldiers are little known in actual war. The majority of military men are far less sensitive than some have said, and incident often follows incident so rapidly in real battle that there is no time for thought or emotion at all. "La Terre" also has faults, the outcome of Zola's reforming purpose, which led him to assemble too many black characters within a small circle; had they been more dispersed among people of an average kind the effect would have been more lifelike. In "Nana" the general blackness of the characters does not seem out of place, for only men and women of a sorry sort gravitate around a harlot. A few more average characters in "La Terre," or, rather, more prominence given to some who scarcely appear in its pages would have greatly improved the book. Here, however, as in "Pot-Bouille," Zola, carried away by his feelings, overlooked that doctrine of average truth, of which Ste.-Beuve had reminded him apropos of "Thérèse Raquin." He then admitted that he had piled on the agony unduly, and he made the same mistake in two or three volumes of "Les

---

pilation at his elbow while he was writing, and every time he borrowed from it a word or expression he marked the latter with a blue pencil, in order to avoid too frequent a repetition of the same term.

Rougon-Macquart." But when all is said "La Terre" remains one of his strongest and most truthful books.[1]

The savage brutishness of the chief characters in the work may well seem impossible to the ignorant; but although in reading "La Terre" one should always bear in mind that Zola never pretended that all peasants were like those in his grim picture, it is certain that his personages, individually, are accurately drawn. Awful is the record of parricides, matricides, fratricides, common murders, murderous assaults, rapes, and offences of inferior degree perpetrated in rural France. And earth hunger, disputes about property, boundaries, inheritances, and so forth, will be found at the bottom of the great majority of cases. But "La Terre" does not deal exclusively with the criminal side of peasant life. It pictures many other features: it describes the drawbacks of the small-holdings system, shows agriculture hampered by the extreme subdivision of the soil, traces the march of revolutionary and socialist principles among those who till it; sketching, too, on the way, the treatment which the imperial *régime* accorded to the peasantry.

There is not space here to pass all the Rougon-Macquart volumes in review from a critical point of view. One may say, however, that generally, though not invariably, those dealing with a multiplicity of characters are superior to those in which Zola analyses the feelings and actions of a few. It is acknowledged he excelled in portraying the

---

[1] A writer in the "Athenæum" [No. 3911, October 11, 1902], when reviewing Miss Betham-Edwards's "East of Paris," pointed out that in a previous work, "France of To-day," 1892, she had denounced "La Terre," and declared it to be "crushingly refuted"; whereas ten years later she admitted that it was "not without foundation on fact."

"crowd." Structural faults are to be found in various volumes. For instance, the long idyll of Silvère and Miette interrupts the narrative of "La Fortune des Rougon" unduly; and the poetical Paradou portion of "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret" is hardly compatible with the realism of the opening and concluding chapters. Then "Le Rêve" is almost out of place in the series, for though the Naturalist writer must take account of the dreamy aspirations and imaginings of certain hearts and minds, it is perhaps excessive to picture those dreams fulfilled in actual happenings. Again, there is some artificiality in "Une Page d'Amour." Innumerable as are the love intrigues in French society one may well doubt if an analysis of any would yield the psychology of Zola's work. "La Curée," on the other hand, within the limitations imposed on the author by circumstances and personal knowledge, is a sound piece of work, quite irrespective of the poetical intentions which some critics have ascribed to it. Passing to such volumes as "La Conquête de Plassans," "Le Ventre de Paris," and "Son Excellence," one finds that though they may be minor works they are very near to life and historical truth. Then "Nana," a great book from the social standpoint, is almost one in the literary sense also. But while freely admitting the greatness of "L'Assommoir" and "Germinal," the volume which particularly appeals to the present writer is "Le Docteur Pascal," perhaps because Zola therein expounds and defends his theory of life. The love of uncle and niece, pictured in this book, may offend the feelings of English and American Protestants, but they ought to remember that in Catholic countries marriages often take place between people connected by that tie of relationship. The writer, for his part, has nothing whatever to say against them from the moral standpoint; he deprecates them, even as he deprecates all marriages between relations, on physiological grounds. But the affections bow neither to legal enactments nor to scientific rules; love, as we are all aware, has no master; and if, therefore, one accept the position of Dr. Pascal and his niece Clotilde, Zola's work will be found one of absorbing interest for the thinking mind. True, it is disfigured by an error which the reader must set aside: the death of the old drunkard Macquart by spontaneous combustion, for scientists have declared such a death to be impossible. Zola, however, long before writing "Le Docteur Pascal," had found a case of the kind recorded in a scientific work; and for years, as several of his letters and utterances show, he had nursed the idea of bringing it into his final volume. Nobody then warned him of his error, but directly his book appeared several scientists protested that, whatever might be the effects of alcoholism, it could not lead to a death like Macquart's. That episode, then, must be dismissed, but the bulk of the book remains, with its terrible lessons, its pages of vivid and merciless analysis, its pictures of the evils of life relieved by a glowing faith in nature's power for good, an optimism which nothing dismays, which points to the dawn of a brighter day for humanity, whatever may be its present condition. And from the purely literary standpoint "Le Docteur Pascal" is admirable. Its style is perfect. The descriptive and the analytical passages are replete with beauty, depth, and force of expression. Poetry is here so thoroughly welded with prose that one cannot object to it as one may in some other volumes, such, for instance, as "Une Page d'Amour," where

cf. Bleak H.

it seems merely a beautiful excrescence. The psychology of the characters in "Le Docteur Pascal" is also good. In point of fact, no doubt, this was a long meditated work. Almost from the time when Zola began his series — at least as soon as the Empire had fallen — he pictured the *finale* ahead of him, he thought of it during all the years when he was writing the intervening volumes, he gradually planned and perfected it in his mind long before he actually wrote it. It is not a book for the vulgar, who come and go, heedless of the problems, possibilities, and purposes of life; but though the love of Pascal and Clotilde may offend moral prejudices, though from the standpoint of scientific accuracy the narrative may be disfigured by the error of Macquart's death, we hold this to be the noblest, the most convincing, the most consoling book that Zola ever wrote. Such an opinion, however, may not find much acceptance in England and America where the bias in favour of revealed religion is so strong.

Without insisting further on the merits or demerits of particular volumes, if we glance at the series as a whole we shall find it to be an unexampled achievement. It is more self-contained than "La Comédie Humaine," in writing which Balzac really had no definite plan. As M. Chaumié, French Minister of Public Instruction, has said: "In Zola's work one finds all society . . . with the *milieux* in which it displays its activity, the men composing it, the passions which stir and sway them, their vices, sorrows, and miseries, the sufferings too of the disinherited, — the whole forming so striking and so true a picture that after contemplating it those with the poorest like those with the keenest sight must realise the necessity of remedying those

Maître Labori

sufferings, contending against those vices, and assuaging those sorrows. . . . Thus, what might have been only an admirable literary achievement, an inestimable document on a period, an ever-living picture of a given time . . . acquires greater grandeur, is insured of yet loftier glory, by the generous spirit which inspired it."[1]

Further, though it has been suggested here that some exaggeration and some flaws may appear in the psychology of certain individual characters, the series as a whole responds to Taine's definition of literature as "a living psychology." As M. Paul Bourget has said: "Zola regarded the novel as a kind of hypothetical experiment, attempted on positive bases, the first condition for success being that the bases should be accurate and the hypothesis logical. When the hour of justice strikes for that unwearying toiler people will recognise what immense preliminary toil and study lay beneath each of his books. They will also discern his unwavering purpose to inquire fully into the condition of contemporary France, to carry his inquiry as far as possible in order to set the social problem completely and accurately before one. His right to depict all reality (*la réalité totale*), which is that of every sociologist, even of every historian, will not be disputed then."

It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that the Rougon-Macquart novels should be studied, whenever possible, in the original French, and not in translations. There have been many versions of the books in the English language; the present writer has made himself responsible for not a few of them; and certainly translations are in a measure useful, for as yet a knowledge of foreign languages is limited to a minority of the reading public. Besides, it is usually possible to transmit in a translation, at least in essential particulars, the lesson which a book is intended to convey. But at the same time much is lost, and in a good many instances translations which have even taken rank as literature do not adequately represent their originals. At the present day, with respect to contemporary works, excellence in translation is scarcely to be obtained, for commercial conditions militate against it. An author may give years to the writing of a book, whereas the English translator is compelled to prepare his version in a few months, at times even in a few weeks, for it is often stipulated by the publisher that the translation must appear at the same time as the original. It may be necessary also for the English translator to attend to some serial publication, and to provide for copyright in America, with the result that the work has to be done hastily, in a rough and ready manner. Again, the prices paid for translations are usually so low that few men of real ability are willing to undertake them. The writer, though he has had great experience in these matters, can suggest no remedy, for undoubtedly the commercial as well as the literary side of the question has to be considered, and even if a translator, regardless of gain, were to bestow on his work all the time and care it might deserve, the chances would be that no publisher would look at it, for the market would be gone — so swiftly do even very able books perish in these modern days.

---

[1] Funeral oration on Zola.

With respect to the writer's own work, as translator or as editor of various English versions of Zola's novels, he is fully aware of its many imperfections, due in some instances to the time limit imposed on him, and in others to pecuniary and similar considerations. Again, British pharisaism being what it is he had never been able to give an absolutely complete version of any of Zola's books. Still he has always tried to preserve the spirit of the original, even when he has been compelled to throw off his "copy" at express speed. And in any case his versions, like those of others, will at least have served the purpose of making most of Zola's views known to thousands who are unable to read French.

But to properly appreciate and judge any one of the works of the great novelist it must be read in the original and in its entirety. That demands a good sound knowledge of French. Nothing has amazed the writer more than to receive from time to time during the last twelve years a note to this effect: "Dear Sir, — I am learning French, and in order to gain a better knowledge of it, I think of trying to read one of Zola's books with the help of a dictionary. Which volume would you recommend me to try? Which is an easy one?" Such an idea is, of course, ludicrous. Zola's style is not particularly involved, his vocabulary if large is not recondite, but to understand him properly the reader must possess more than a mere smattering of French. In some volumes, too, he deals with technical subjects, while in others he occasionally uses slang or purely Parisian expressions, in which cases dictionaries are of very little help. The present writer found it necessary to study certain subjects carefully before attempting to translate some of Zola's volumes: for it was only by doing so that he could avoid mistakes. For instance, the English version of "Travail" necessitated the perusal of several text-books on metallurgy, and a visit to some large English steel works. An American version of the same book was made by a person who did not take that precaution, with the result that it literally bristled with technical errors. When one considers the vast range of Zola's subjects, it must be obvious that the work of translating his books amounts to little less than a liberal education. The writer must confess that for his part he learnt a great deal by the work, so that if he conferred no particular advantage on his readers he at least benefited himself.

In previous chapters some mention has been made of Zola's repeated efforts as a playwright, and as after 1893 he only penned some *libretti* for the music of his friend, M. Bruneau, one may here add a few words respecting his plays. None of those which he wrote without assistance proved a success, though he often claimed that some of the public were favourable to "Le Bouton de Rose," which, said he, was damned mainly by the critics. On the other hand the stage-craft of M. Busnach made a success of "L'Assommoir" and of one or two other adaptations. In all probability the correct view to take of Zola's writings for and about the French stage is that their influence, however considerable, was chiefly indirect. Realism has come to dramatic literature — on which the novel always reacts — but the younger French dramatists rightly regard M. Henri Becque as their more immediate sponsor. At the same time several things that Zola desired to see have come to pass; a good many of his philosophical and social ideas are to be found in the contemporary French drama. Now and again they appear somewhat conspicuously, as in M. Octave Mirbeau's play "Les Mauvais Bergers," and in some of the works of M. Brieux.

Again, M. Gustave Charpentier's famous *roman musical*, "Louise," produced in 1900, was distinctly Zolaesque in its inspiration; one of its chief features, the frequent evocation of Paris, proceeding directly from "Une Page d'Amour." Further Zola's influence was at times destructive. Soon after "La Terre" had been published in Paris the Comédie Française revived George Sand's peasant-play "François le Champi," which since its first production in 1849 had been frequently played with success at the Odéon Theatre. But the revival at the Comédie proved a complete failure, the play which had lived for nearly forty years being slain in a few nights. Originally regarded as ultra-realistic, it appeared quite insipid to the generation which had just perused "La Terre." To sum up, even as the influence of Balzac (though he wrote little for the stage) was apparent in dramatic productions from 1850 to 1870, something similar though, perhaps, less pronounced may be observed with respect to the more recent influence of Zola. He, by the way, was once asked his opinion of the influence of Ibsen on the French stage, and of Tolstoï and other Russians on the French novel, and he replied that he did not attach much importance to the question, for he held that the ideas which were supposed to rain on Paris from the North were in reality French ones, which had been disseminated by French writers, and had come back to their place of origin, occasionally crystallised or intensified by the more sombre imagination of Scandinavian and Russian minds.

XII

THE MAN—HIS LIFE DRAMA—A NEW DEPARTURE.

1893–1897

Zola's personal appearance — A palmist's reading of his hand — Some of his petty manias and superstitions — His powers of observation — His memory — Characteristics of his intellect — His daily life — His orderliness — His "confession" — The drama of his life — A childless home — Birth of an illegitimate daughter and son — Some great men and the moral law — Some eminent women and the popular standard of morality — The alleged "new Zola" — Sermonising novels — "L'Attaque du Moulin" as an opera — The trilogy of "Lourdes," "Rome," and "Paris" — Faith, hope, and charity to be replaced by fruitfulness, work, truth, and justice — Attacks on "Lourdes" — Arrest of Dreyfus — Zola, his book "Rome," and Pope Leo XIII. — His stay in the Eternal City — He visits his Italian relatives — Difficulties of writing "Rome" — Its publication — Charges of plagiarism and Zola's answer — His volume "Nouvelle Campagne" — His opinion of a *clairvoyante* — His first defence of the Jews.

In middle age Zola was about five feet seven inches high. His trunk was short, his legs being rather long for a man of the stature indicated, but he had a broad and prominent chest, and his shoulders were well set. His left foot was sensibly shorter than the right, his instep was very arched. He had small wrists, but large though shapely hands with small round nails. According to Dr. Édouard Toulouse[1] all the diameters of his skull were distinctly above the average, but his brain was never weighed, for at the time of his death his friends resisted applications made to them by certain scientists to whom, it seems, Zola himself had almost promised that his remains would be at their disposal.

---

[1] "Enquête Médico-Psychologique sur les Rapports de la Supériorité Intellectuelle avec la Névropathie. Introduction générale. Émile Zola," by Dr. É. Toulouse, Paris, 1896.

Being very short-sighted, he usually wore glasses, seen though which his eyes seemed deep and somewhat stern; but in intimacy they softened and sparkled freely. At one period he wore his hair short, at another long, and according to these variations his forehead seemed to change, assuming at one time an appearance of abnormal height. His lips were somewhat thick and sensual, inclined to pout. He had large ears, and heard better with the left than with the right. For music, in spite of his long association with M. Bruneau, the composer, he really had little ear, though he possessed a keen sense of rhythm. On looking at him the feature that most struck one was certainly his nose, which had a gradually broadening, lobulated tip. Edmond de Goncourt declared that Zola's physiognomy was summed up in this somewhat peculiar nasal organ,[1] which, he jestingly remarked, resembled the muzzle of a sporting dog, and assumed all sorts of expressions — indicating, in turn, approval, condemnation, wonder, amusement, sadness, or whatever else might be its owner's opinion or mood. While making all allowance for humoristic exaggeration, there was certainly some truth in Goncourt's words.[2]

Zola's hands, to which reference has been made above, were examined on one occasion by a "palmist"; and for the benefit of those who believe in chiromancy one may mention that the sibyl's pronouncement was to this effect: "A great change at forty years of age; a long life; a sudden death; fond of family life and travelling; proficient in art and partial to military music; confident in the future but having little confidence in himself personally; a large heart but more philanthropically inclined towards collectivities than towards individuals; possessed of a deep sense of justice, the slightest injustice exasperating him; admiring audacity, strength, and authority while fond of liberty for himself; influenced more by his mind than by sensual passion at the outset of his love affairs, but afterwards extremely ardent."[1]

---

[1] "Journal des Goncourt," Vol. VI, p. 254.

[2] According to Dr. Toulouse, Zola was less keen than most people in detecting odours, but he had a "smell memory" and could remember objects by their scent.

The lack of self-confidence indicated by the palmist was confirmed by Zola to Dr. Toulouse, who found that the novelist's doubt of himself was excessive and unreasonable. He frequently feared that he might be unable to accomplish his daily task, finish the book he had begun, or conclude the speech he was delivering. At one period, before he could go to bed he had to satisfy a peculiar craving to touch and retouch certain articles of furniture, open and reopen certain drawers. Arithmomania pursued him: he was for ever counting the gas lamps in one or another street, and the number of the houses. He long believed multiples of three to be of good augury, but later, as he told Goncourt, multiples of seven inspired him with most confidence. Moreover, he was so susceptible to thunder and lightning that whenever a storm burst over Médan all the shutters had to be closed and all the lamps lighted, after which he would often bandage his eyes with a handkerchief. Even when there was no storm and he found himself in absolute darkness, he was occasionally troubled by what seemed to be luminous phenomena.

---

[1] Published in 1893.

A dreadful idea came to him now and then: it was that his heart had moved into his arm or his thigh, and that he could feel it beating there. It must be said, too, that he was most sensitive to physical pain[1] and extremely subject to emotion, which brought on attacks of a form of angina from which he suffered, periodically, over a period of thirty years. The insults levelled at him by unscrupulous journalists, as much with respect to the alleged obscenity of his writings as to his share in the Dreyfus case, constantly led to such attacks, but his mind being always superior to his body, he never swerved from what he regarded as his duty — the enunciation of inconvenient truths — even though he knew he would be savagely denounced for it and that his ailment would necessarily return. Briefly, as Dr. Toulouse has said, his *émotivité*, although morbid, always left his mind in a state of perfect lucidity and equilibrium. To the psychologist and the physician his example demonstrated, in the most unimpeachable manner, the authority of the mind over the body, the power of the will over disease.

His powers of observation were exceptionally keen. Dr. Toulouse, in the course of an experiment he made with him, placed a photograph of an idiot child before his eyes for a few moments. He immediately noticed certain anatomical peculiarities which as a rule would only strike a medical man, and he noticed them although they were scarcely perceptible in the photograph, which had greatly faded. But, adds Dr. Toulouse, as soon as Zola ceased to observe consciously, his attention flagged, and at times he did not even recognise acquaintances whom he met in the street. "They think," he said to the doctor, "that when I forget to acknowledge them I am absorbed in deep meditation about my next novel, but as a matter of fact I am not thinking of anything." It was the same with his memory. When he wished to remember any object or scene, the details became printed on his mind as clearly and fully as if they had been photographed. But unless he made a voluntary effort, his memory did not serve him. When he was Président de la Société des Gens de Lettres three months elapsed before he could repeat the names of the twenty-four members of the committee. If he had been as deeply interested in those gentlemen as he was in the facts he collected for his books, he would certainly have recalled their names at once.

---

[1] He showed great sensitiveness to all cutaneous impressions. He could not wear clothes in any degree tight, or lie in bed "tucked in." As a rule he slept for seven hours, and on awaking he constantly complained of pains in one and another part of the body, this being a symptom common among those who are liable to nervous affections.

Some novelists note everything around them, — people, places, and occurrences,— and store them up for subsequent use in one or another book; but that was not Zola's system. If he were writing about peasants, other matters scarcely interested him. You might have told him something curious about soldiers or financiers, he would have given it little heed. He isolated his mind, as it were, concentrated it entirely on the subject he had in hand. Moreover, his imagination was as systematic as his memory. As stated in a previous chapter, he first decided on the general ideas he would illustrate; then, by deduction, he imagined the characters likely to illustrate those ideas. A thousand concrete facts thereupon arose in his mind, grouped themselves in his system, and imparted life to his philosophical abstractions. That faculty, that power of assembling affinitive images, tending to a logical end, was preponderant in Zola. By its means the psychical processus is canalised, mental effort and waste are diminished, and the will is able to act in a well-defined manner. In Zola such power was developed to the highest degree, and therein will be found the reason of his intellectual superiority. It links him with all the great creators possessed of systematic minds, the men who have gone, not groping darkly, but with patient effort and in full light, towards their objects. Hugo and Balzac showed by their writings that their brains were organised in the same manner. The quick and inconsiderate mind, so unequal in its inspirations, which is often attributed to artists, does not seem compatible with great creative power, the latter acting in a much more uniform manner. Zola's particular mentality explains both his life and his work. He systematised in literature the realistic tendencies of the philosophy of Comte and Taine; and he carried that systematisation to its farthest limit by creating the novel of complete observation (*le roman d'observation intégrale*), in which he studied heredity under all its aspects, recoiling from no audacity either of observation or of expression.

By mere reasoning, adds Dr. Toulouse, whom we still follow,[1] Zola's systematic mind traced for itself a course of action which was often at variance with his instincts, yet he followed it perseveringly, sustained merely by his conception of duty. His tendency to gout and corpulence (which last he overcame by sheer determination) must have predisposed him to laziness, but he mastered any such inclination by compelling himself to do a certain amount of work every day. As a rule he then wrote quite sufficient "copy" to form three pages of one of his books, in addition to occasional newspaper articles. He also carried on an extensive correspondence, yet the only time when he had recourse to secretarial help was the period of the Dreyfus case. *Nulla dies sine linea* was a motto he had adopted early in life, and lest it should be forgotten it was graven in letters of gold over the fireplace of his large study at Médan, where most of his books were written.

---

[1] Not in the work previously quoted, but in a paper he wrote after Zola's death ("Le Temps," October, 1902).

At Médan he rose at eight o'clock, went for an hour's stroll, seating himself at his writing table at nine and writing till one o'clock, usually on an empty stomach, for after he had resolved to conquer his corpulence his first meal consisted generally of a mere crust of bread, though now and again he might partake of a couple of eggs "on the plate," which to please him had to be cooked to a nicety. At one o'clock he lunched; and then, perhaps, came a short nap, after which he either read the papers or worked at an article or went out walking, cycling, or boating. If he were at home in the afternoon, he drank a cup of tea, and this carried him on till dinner, which was served at half-past seven. Afterwards, if friends were staying with him, there might be a game of billiards or a quiet chat over another cup of tea. For some years he drank nothing at all with his meals, at which he preferred his fish fried and his meat grilled; but later he allowed himself a glass of water, and on a hot afternoon, if he were thirsty, he now and then indulged in a little white wine and eau de Seltz.

Red wine he did not touch from 1887 till the time of his death; but occasionally, after a meal or in the evening, he treated himself to a thimbleful of old cognac or some liqueur. This happened perhaps once a week, not more frequently, so it will be seen that he was almost a total abstainer.

Both at Médan and in Paris (unless he were spending the evening in society or at a theatre) Zola retired to his bedroom between ten and eleven o'clock, but he generally remained reading there for some hours before he actually went to bed. His mornings in Paris like those at Médan were given to writing; and as he could not boat or conveniently cycle in the metropolis, his afternoon outings resolved themselves into visits or strolls to sundry places which he might wish to describe in some forthcoming book. Six o'clock in the evening was the hour usually appointed for receiving newspaper interviewers or those who brought him letters of introduction. His Sundays were spent much like his week-days, except that instead of working at a book he then often gave the morning to letter-writing. Glancing through a large collection of his letters we find some scores of them written on one and another Sunday. These particulars will show the general orderliness of his life, which was further exemplified by his extremely tidy habits, the regularity with which he changed his clothes directly he came home, substituting a loose flannel shirt, a working jacket, and slippers for his linen, his black coat, and his boots. And he never left the slightest litter of papers in his workroom; such documents as he might be using were set out tidily on various tables; the newspapers he read were always neatly folded directly he had finished perusing them; the very string of the parcels he received was at once rolled up and put aside in a drawer; he liked to have everything spick and span, and it was he himself who attended to virtually all the *ménage* of his Parisian and country workrooms.

About 1893 a "confession" of the drawing-room order was extracted from Zola, and on consulting it one finds him stating that his favourite colour (like Daudet's) was red and his favourite flower the rose, though he also had a taste for peonies and dahlias, which he grew in profusion at Médan. Contrary to Daudet, who expressed a liking for no animals or birds whatever, he declared that he liked them all. Work, he wrote, was his favourite occupation, while his dream of happiness was to do nothing. The quality he preferred in man was kind-heartedness, in woman tenderness. His favourite authors, painters, and composers were those who saw and expressed things clearly. His favourite heroes and heroines in fiction were those who were not heroes or heroines; in real life, those who earned their bread. The greatest misfortune he knew was to remain in doubt respecting anything; the historical characters he most despised were traitors; the gift he most desired to possess was eloquence; and the way he would like to die was "suddenly."

Of one longing which possessed Zola for several years there is no mention in the "confession"; neither is it indicated in Dr. Toulouse's "Enquête." But its nature and its consequences must be stated here. Eminent writers have more than once laid down the rule that if in writing an account of any living individual it is best to preserve reticence and avoid everything offensive, on the other hand it is essential that the biographer of one who is dead and gone should tell the truth respecting him. Of course it may prove advisable, and indeed justice itself may require, that one should be kind to his virtues and a little blind to his faults, for the former may be many and exemplary, and the latter few and unimportant; but if one were to ignore the last completely a very erroneous impression would be conveyed, the *suppressio veri* being equivalent to the *suggestio falsi*. Nevertheless in this present age, when so many agree to shun the truth because it offends the superfine delicacy of their degenerate natures, one is constantly confronted by so-called biographies of eminent men, and notable women also, in which a variety of facts are suppressed, the world at large being taught to look at these people through deceptive glasses which show them perfect, whereas, in reality, their flaws were often great. At times, indeed, one is invited to contemplate such beings as can never have existed, and though the falsity of the picture may merely irritate the scholar, it utterly misleads the uninitiated, tending to absolutely erroneous conceptions and adding yet another lie to the many on which present-day society is based.

In the case of Zola, he was such an impassioned servant of truth that to conceal the truth concerning him, to paint him in false colours, would be doing him a wrong. Besides, he never claimed that he was perfect, he knew that he was very human. Further, the facts which must now be mentioned were written about more or less accurately, but openly, in several Parisian newspapers at the time of his death; the present writer also had occasion to refer to them in a newspaper article; and some American journals likewise gave them currency. Thus the omission of all mention of them here would be as ridiculous as misleading. At the same time it is quite unnecessary to go beyond the essential facts, which may be recounted with comparative brevity.

When Zola married, about the time he began his Rougon-Macquart novels, he certainly looked forward to a life of unalloyed happiness. But though he achieved celebrity and became possessed of comparative wealth, though his wife was all love and devotion, there remained a great void in his existence. He had no child, and the desire for paternity was strong within him. One can trace it through many of his books, and there is no doubt whatever that it became a fixed idea with him, was responsible for some of his petty superstitions, and entered even into that dread of death which the loss of his mother and of his friend Flaubert at one time suggested. He would die and would leave no posterity. Of what value was life, then? He had always regarded transmission as being its first essential function; and it tortured him at times to think that he was famous, that he was rich, and that he would leave no offspring behind him.

It may be said that this happens to many men; that some become more or less reconciled to it; that some go, quietly grieving, to their graves. Others, however, are egotistical enough to experience no desire for paternity. There are also instances of men to whom an extreme culture imparts a kind of self-sufficingness: for example, all the unmarried philosophers, from those of Greece to those of our own times. Even among the great men who have married one will find many unblessed with offspring. Scientists have occasionally tried to explain this in one way or another, but no explanation seems to be of general applicability. In that connection one must remember that there have also been many men, distinguished by the exceptional activity of their minds, who have left large families. Occasionally they may have survived their children, as in the case of that untiring worker, Victor Hugo, but none the less, even if they have had the grief of losing both sons and daughters, they have known the happiness of paternity.

That a craving for such happiness should have become intense in a man like Zola, with all the emotional tendencies of his temperament, was natural, perhaps fatal. It was one of the sufferings that made him seek a refuge in steady, all-absorbing work, and for years, by immersing himself in his task, he contrived to dull his pain and silence all the suggestions of a rebellious nature. Goncourt, one day after returning from a visit to Médan, jotted down in his diary some remarks about the gloom, the emptiness of that spacious abode. There were plenty of dogs, but there were no children, and children were necessary to such a home. It is evident that Goncourt with his keen penetration had divined the secret grief of its master and mistress. But years rolled on, and hopes first fondly cherished, then clung to with despairing tenacity, remained unfulfilled. The moralist will say undoubtedly that resignation was the one right course, but human nature seldom resigns itself willingly to anything, and certainly Zola's nature was not one to do so. As he approached his fiftieth year it began to assert itself, as Goncourt shows us in another passage of his "Journal"; and then, after long years of battling, however strong the spirit might still be, the flesh finally triumphed over it.

It is unnecessary to review what the Bible and Buckstone, Taylor and Kent, Montesquieu and Potier have to say respecting the violation of the marriage vow, and the distinctions which may be drawn between the action of husband and of wife. Nor need there be any defence on the lines of the *théorie des deux morales* as interpreted by Nisard. One may allow that there is strictly only one moral law for both sexes and for all stations in life, royal as well as plebeian. At the same time one is entitled to indicate whatever extenuating circumstances may exist. One may think of the position of Thomas and Jane Carlyle, as enunciated by the supporters of the former, and then picture a very different sequel, for in Zola's case a time came when he was carried away from the path of strict duty, and in the result a child was born to him, a daughter called Denise. Later came the birth of a son, called Jacques. An echo of what happened — the tempestuous passion of a man of ripe years for a young woman — resounded through the pages of "Le Docteur Pascal," while "Fécondité," published much later, revealed many of the sufferings, much of the yearning, that had led to this crisis in Zola's life.

Those who are perfect may now throw stones. Many who are not will, of course, do so, regardless of permission, and with the greater alacrity as the dead man cannot answer them. But he was forgiven long ago by the one person who was entitled to complain. There was much suffering, much unhappiness, of which the world heard nothing, but at last her broad nobility of mind rose above the personal wrong and the common prejudice, and in these later days she has transferred much of the devotion with which she encompassed her husband to the children whose birth followed the crisis which, at one time, threatened to sweep the home away.

Let us remember, too, that the case of Zola was in no wise exceptional. Our great men have to be taken with their faults as with their virtues. Englishmen will remember that Nelson, Wellington, and Lord Melbourne violated the popular standard of morality, and yet rendered great services to their country. Americans will remember the same of Franklin, Daniel Webster, and Henry Clay. A recent President of the United States was not above reproach when he was elected to the supreme magistracy. There is an English statesman of commanding abilities, on one page of whose career a blot appears and who for that reason has been pursued with unrelenting hatred by canting Pharisees — those to whom one owes the monstrous and inhuman doctrine that an error in a man's life must never be forgiven, that if he stumble but once he must always remain damned. With their narrow bigotry those people arrogate to themselves a greater righteousness than that of the Christ whose precepts they pretend to follow. To love one another, to forget and to forgive, are no maxims of theirs. Though the name of the Deity is so constantly on their lips, they really seem to be men after the devil's own heart, for they play the part of his imps, ever intent on persecution.

If the world were to reject all the great men who have erred, would not the pantheons of the nations be well-nigh empty? If it were to reject the works of every writer whose life was not absolutely immaculate, what literature would be left? Masterpieces of the human mind, writings that have wrought an infinity of good, would be cast aside. One may remind the reader that a good many English authors even of that age of specious respectability, the Victorian era, were by no means perfect in their private lives. In France, no doubt, more laxity has prevailed. Take that champion of Christianity, Chateaubriand, and remember the many *liaisons* of his married life; take that great deist, Victor Hugo, also a married man, and with no such excuse as Chateaubriand and Zola may have had, and remember his long connection with Madame Juliette Drouet. And as examples of moral laxity among men outside the matrimonial pale, take Alfred de Musset and both the Dumas, particularly the elder. Old Parisians, like the writer, will remember the day in or about 1869 when even the boulevards were scandalised by the sight which confronted one and all in the windows of every shop where photographs were sold. There was the portrait of the prince of romancers with Adah Isaacs Menken, the circus-rider, seated, in her fleshings, on his knees, her arms cast lovingly about his neck. Happily in the afternoon the son appeared upon the scene and carried off all such photographs that he could find, and thereupon Paris, which had been laughing a pornographic laugh, applauded him, recalling the story of Japhet and his father Noah.

But it is not only men who have thrust the moral law aside. The lives of George Eliot and others are known to us. They were as nothing beside that of George Sand, who in the matter of her private life was perhaps the nearest approach to Byron to be found among female writers. She passed from Baron Dudevant, her husband, to Jules Sandeau, then to Mérimée, then to Musset, then to Pagello, then to Michel de Bourges, then to Pierre Leroux, then to Chopin, and at last to Manceau, the engraver, those passions being interspersed with platonic interludes with Lamennais and Liszt. Yet Emerson, "one of the purest of men, dwelt on the rare and beautiful sentiment that runs through George

Sand's 'Consuelo.' And who can deny the evidence of keen political insight, lofty ideas, and pure morality in the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, Frances Wright, and George Eliot?"[1] People still read "Consuelo," even as they read "Les Trois Mousquetaires." They also read "Les Contemplations" and even dip into "Le Génie du Christianisme." They ostracise none of the great writers because there was error in their lives. Besides, it must be acknowledged as true that a counsel of perfection, or what we regard as perfection from our social standpoint, may well come from the imperfect. In fact it could not be otherwise, since we are all imperfect in one or another way.

Thus to reject Zola's books and his teaching on the ground that there came a lapse in his life after fifty years of strenuous endeavour would be ridiculous, for it would entail the rejection of hundreds of others. The subject may be dismissed, then, without further comment from the moral point of view. Undoubtedly it will always be a source of regret to Zola's friends that this happened, even though it satisfied the great craving of his life. In spite of all our knowledge of human imperfection we always try to picture an ideal being, and we sorrow when the flaw in our ideal is discovered, even though reason tells us that we ought to have been prepared for it.

That the occurrences referred to caused great perturbation in Zola's life goes without saying; and as, about this time or soon afterwards, some change appeared in his writings, a certain co-relation between that change and his domestic troubles might be suspected. But beyond what is apparent in parts of "Le Docteur Pascal," and much later in "Fécondité" and "Travail," Zola's writings show no trace of the passing storm. It was assumed by some critics, after the completion of the Rougon-Macquart novels, that "a new Zola" had arisen, the man who wrote "Lourdes," "Rome," and "Paris" being, said they, evidently very different from the one who had penned "Nana," "Pot-Bouille," and "La Terre." It was even asserted that this novelist who had been so obscene was becoming quite moral, at least for a man with such shocking antecedents. But the inanity of that contention is demonstrated by the facts of the case. The so-called obscene books were written by one who led a life of the most rigid personal rectitude, whereas the later volumes, which were received far more favourably, were the work of one whom passion had conquered. That should suffice to show how worthless is a certain kind of criticism. Moreover, any change that was noticed in Zola's writings was in one respect more apparent than real. In some of his books he had set down horrible and loathsome things because he had found them involved in his subject. Subsequently, being confronted by less mire, he naturally gave it less prominence. At the same time "Le Docteur Pascal" certainly marked a new departure in his manner. In his previous works, as we have remarked before, he had sunk his personality and had never preached. In "Le Docteur Pascal" he began to do so, and this gradually became a habit with him. The reason is not far to seek. For more than twenty years the critics had constantly said to him: "If you must show the vileness of life, you should at least point the moral. You should deplore such terrible things, denounce them, thunder at them in your pages." Remarks of that kind having been repeated hundreds of times, it is not surprising that Zola, who had long felt annoyed at seeing his books misinterpreted, should have ended by complying with the clamour. Curiously enough, however, the very critics who had called on him for moral ejaculations, who had begged for sermons, then became mightily indignant. "This man," they said, "has no imagination left; he does nothing but preach, his books are as dull as ditch water. After all, we liked 'Nana' better." Such was the result of Zola's change of manner, a result which might have been foreseen.

---

[1] "Westminster Review," January, 1891, "Patriotism and Chastity," p. 2.

After his departure from England in 1893, the present writer remained without news of him for some weeks; but in November he wrote that he had been ill and unable to attend to anything: the fact being that this was a critical time in connection with his domestic affairs. Nevertheless he gave some attention to an opera which his friend M. Alfred Bruneau based on "L'Attaque du Moulin," the libretto being partly the work of M. Louis Gallet and partly that of Zola himself. The first performance took place at the Opéra Comique, then under M. Carvalho's management, on November 23, with a result gratifying to all concerned; and Zola afterwards turned to the writing of his novel, "Lourdes," which he intended to make the first of three volumes to be called "Les Trois Villes," that is, Lourdes, Rome, and Paris.

The writing of those works was inspired by the trend of French literature and also of opinion in France at that time. A few years previously, on being interviewed on the question whether Naturalism were an expiring school or not, Zola had laughingly answered in the negative.[1] Nevertheless he had observed the rise of the Symbolist, Occultist, and Décadent schools, — a wave of returning mysticism, as it were, which, as he had remarked in an address to the Paris students, was invading art as well as literature. No little balderdash was being written about the alleged bankruptcy of science, Rome was coquetting with the Republic, there was much talk of a new Catholicism adapted to the modern world, the clergy were showing extreme activity, and a good many *universitaires* and *normaliens*, among whom the Voltairean spirit had formerly predominated, seemed won over to the Church's side and anxious to co-operate with it in securing the return of France to the fold, as if, indeed, agnosticism had been carried too far and must now be checked. The Lourdes and similar pilgrimages represented a notable phase of the agitation, and Zola, who had attended them two years running as a spectator, found in them some illustration of the first of the Christian virtues, Faith. It thereupon occurred to him that Rome would illustrate Hope, for it was in her and in her pontiff, Leo XIII, that all who desired to see the world reconquered by a rejuvenated Catholicism set their hopes. Finally Paris would afford abundant illustration of Charity in its various senses. Now the question whether religion might flourish anew in France depended, at least largely, on the practice of the aforesaid virtues and the light in which they were regarded by the community at large. Was the faith of Lourdes justified, was any real hope to be found in Rome, was the charity of Paris adequate or not? Zola returned a negative answer to all those questions; and at an early stage of the writing of "Les Trois Villes" he resolved to supplement this series by a further one which would enunciate the principles in which he himself believed, that is, Fruitfulness, Work, Truth, and Justice, all springing from the fundamental basis of Love.

---

[1] "Enquête sur l'Evolution Littéraire," by Jules Huret, Paris, 1891.

"Lourdes" gave him occupation throughout the winter of 1893–1894. It appeared first in the "Gil-Blas," which paid fifty thousand francs for the serial rights, and early in the autumn of 1894 it was issued as a volume,[1] whereupon a prelate of the papal household, a certain Monseigneur Ricard, vicar-general of the diocese of Aix, in Provence, arose to answer Zola, which he did in a very blundering way.[2] The fathers of the Lourdes grotto also attempted some direct denials of Zola's accusations of greed and imposture, and being all powerful in the town prevented the sale of the book there, while as a crowning stroke of condemnation it was deferred to Rome and promptly placed, like some of Zola's previous works, in the famous "Index Librorum Prohibitorum." Once again, also, abusive letters rained upon the author, some emanating from deluded believers in the Lourdes miracles, and others from angry priests and monks. Several of those correspondents interlarded their effusions with the language of the gutter, while others contented themselves with briefly cursing the man who presumed to doubt the sanctity of the unfortunate Bernadette, and the virtues of the spring which the Assumptionist Fathers had turned into a river of gold. That money was used in part for the purpose of subsidising Leo XIII, but the bulk was employed in fighting the French Republic with the object of restoring a monarchy under which the Church, and particularly its monks, would have been all powerful.

---

[1] "Lourdes," Paris, Charpentier, 1894, 18mo, 598 pages. Seventy thousand copies sold on publication; one hundred and fifty-fourth thousand in 1903.

[2] "La Vraie Bernadette de Lourdes," Paris, 1894.

Soon after "Lourdes" was finished Zola turned to "Rome," which necessitated a great deal of study. He was immersed in it when there came an incident fraught with grave future consequences for France. An artillery captain named Alfred Dreyfus, attached to the General Staff of the army, was arrested on a charge of communicating military secrets to the German embassy. The arrest took place on October 15, 1894, but did not become known until the end of the month, when it was divulged by two newspapers, "La Libre Parole" and "L'Éclair." Zola gave little or no heed to it, for quitting his books and papers he was at that very moment preparing for a visit to Rome, which he had projected for some time past.

About the middle of October he had told Vizetelly, who was then with him at Médan, that he had some hope the Pope would receive him, and that he certainly intended to apply for an audience. Vizetelly gave publicity to this statement, which was quoted on all sides. But almost immediately afterwards, Vizetelly having returned to England, Zola on talking the matter over with some friends found that no audience with the Pope was possible. The reason was simple enough. "Lourdes," "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret," and several other volumes of his writings — just like the novels of Dumas *père*, that "accursed Garibaldian" — were in the "Index," and accordingly, before even applying for an audience, he would have to withdraw and annihilate those books so far as lay in his power, and make a full submission to Holy Church.

Such were the facts. A little investigation of the subject showed peremptorily that the popes made it an inflexible rule to receive no authors whose writings figured among the prohibited books unless and until those authors had withdrawn their writings and submitted. Abbé Alfred Loisy, the author of "La Question Biblique" and "L'Évangile et l'Église," has of more recent times discovered the *procédure* to be such as is here stated. He, like Zola's Abbé Pierre Froment, repaired to Rome to plead his cause, but though cardinals may have received him, he was not allowed to approach the Pope. Zola, in his "Rome," used a novelist's license when he brought Abbé Pierre face to face with Leo XIII; and all readers of the book are aware that the interview is pictured as a secret one, obtained by surreptitious means, such as Zola could never have employed. Had he asked for an audience he must have done so through the usual channel, that of the French embassy to the Vatican; and we have before us that embassy's express statement that no such application was ever made. Thus, contrary to the assertions which went the round of the world's press, Zola did not ask to see the Pope, and the Pope did not have occasion to refuse him.

Leaving Paris at the end of October, he remained in Rome till December 15. He applied for an audience at the Quirinal, and was received with a gracious cordiality by King Umberto. Both the French ambassador to the Italian court and the ambassador to the Vatican placed themselves at his disposal, and furnished him either personally or through their *attachés* with a quantity of information. Some of the Italian ministers took a similar course. He was welcomed, too, in several drawing-rooms. M. Hébert, the great French painter, accompanied him on his visits to the

Palatine, the Sistine Chapel, the *stanze* of Raffaelle, and the Vatican Museum. Signor Bernabei, director-general of the excavations, accompanied him on other occasions, and supplied him with a quantity of notes. As for the foolish tale that he bribed Vatican servants for information, a tale which went the round of the press, it was purely imaginative. With two ambassadors, half a dozen *attachés*, and a score of prominent Italian officials at his disposal, Zola had no need to apply to any servants whatever.

On quitting Rome he betook himself to Venice and Brescia with the object of visiting the Italian members of his family, the Venetian Petrapolis and Frattas, and particularly his cousin, Carlo Zola, then a judge of the Brescian Appeal Court. Venice gave him a public reception, and at Brescia his cousin greeted him with open arms. Unfortunately, though the novelist, assisted by his knowledge of Latin and Provençal, was able to read Italian fairly accurately, he could not speak it; and as on the other hand the judge knew no French, an interpreter had to be provided. In spite of this drawback the intercourse was very pleasant, and when after a sojourn of some days at Brescia Zola set out on his journey to Paris, he repeatedly promised to return. He was never able to do so, but his wife, who revisited Italy on more than one occasion subsequently, took care to keep up the family intercourse which had been renewed after the lapse of so many years.

While Zola was visiting Rome the French military authorities had been busy with the case of Captain Dreyfus, but the latter's court-martial did not begin till December 19, that is, about the time of the novelist's return to Paris; the degradation of the unfortunate officer following on January

5, 1895. Zola, however, was now busy classifying all the materials he had brought from Rome and revolving in his mind the tremendous task which lay before him. Thus, once again, he gave comparatively little attention to the proceedings against Dreyfus. Moreover there was nothing in the newspapers to indicate any probability of a miscarriage of justice. Like everybody else, — except the members of the Dreyfus family, whom he did not know, — Zola assumed that the convicted officer was guilty, and thereupon dismissed the matter from his mind.

Writing to Vizetelly on January 11, he said that he hoped to make "Rome" a work of European interest, and if possible he should include in it some account of the wonderful progress which the Catholic Church claimed to be effecting in Great Britain and the United States of America. He hoped the book would be shorter than "Lourdes," and he intended to keep it "absolutely chaste, though very *passionné*, for while Abbé Froment would be the central figure, a very tragic *drame passionnel* would be unfolded beside him." However, the historic, descriptive, and controversial parts of the work expanded in Zola's hands, and far from "Rome" proving shorter than "Lourdes," it exceeded that book in length by a hundred and fifty pages. The *drame passionnel* which was to have been so prominent a feature, became nearly lost among the surrounding matter, so that by the time the work was finished little suggested that it was intended to be a novel. At the same time it was certainly one of the books on which Zola expended most time and study. He had begun to examine his subject in the summer of 1894, and his proofs were not finally passed for press till the end of February, 1896. It may be said that he gave the whole of 1895 to the writing of "Rome." As he had not been able to remain very long in the Eternal City, Madame Zola returned thither to collect further information on various points, and a perfect mountain of documents at last encompassed the struggling novelist, who had no little difficulty in shaping his course. In December, 1895, the work began to appear as a *feuilleton* in "Le Journal," the organ of Zola's friend, M. Fernand Xau, and about the same time an English translation was issued by various provincial and colonial journals, Vizetelly having to perform a *tour de force* in order to ensure this early publication. In the case of "Lourdes" he had been assisted by his personal knowledge of the spot, and a similar knowledge helped him with "Rome," the actual translation of which had to be made in about nine weeks in order to meet commercial requirements. That little fact will serve to illustrate the remarks made in a previous chapter concerning the imperfection of the translations issued under the conditions which nowadays prevail in the publishing world.

When "Rome" appeared as a volume early in the spring of 1896,[1] M. Gaston Deschamps, writing in "Le Temps," roundly accused Zola of plagiarism, and it is certain that here and there "Rome" contained sentences taken from Firmin Didot's publication, "Le Vatican," and Gaston Boissier's "Promenades archéologiques." Zola, on being accused, replied in "Le Figaro" to the effect that when he was writing a book he invariably consulted every available work bearing on his subject. He passed several of his former novels in review, mentioning the books by others which had been useful to him, and also naming the politicians, merchants, scientists, lawyers, architects, and others who had provided him with detailed memoranda on various points. For instance Jules Ferry had given him some information about the Haussmannization of Paris for "La Curée," M. Chauchard, the director of the "Grands Magasins du Louvre," had largely assisted him with "Au Bonheur des Dames," M. Edmond Perrier, the scientist, had helped him with the passages about seaweed and bromide of potassium in "La Joie de Vivre," M. Frantz-Jourdain, the eminent architect, had constantly befriended him in architectural matters, M. Henri Céard had supplied him with notes on music, and M. Thyébaut with consultations on points of law, while the theory of an "elixir of life," embodied in "Le Docteur Pascal," had been built for him by his friend Dr. Maurice de Fleury. Indeed Zola claimed that he had never discussed a scientific question or written about an illness in his books without first taking the opinion of scientists and medical men. But he claimed that he had assimilated, adapted, and in a sense transmuted all the information he had derived from persons and books. As for "Rome" he was charged with having borrowed some sentences from two or three well-known works, but, in fact, he had consulted some scores of volumes, the titles of many of which he gave. Briefly, he pictured himself as an architect or a sculptor, and his materials as building stones or modelling clay; suggesting also the example of those masters of the Renaissance who employed a swarm of workers to prepare their paints, their "grounds," and so forth. And he contended that what he had done was perfectly legitimate, the only question being whether he had so used his materials as to produce a substantial, harmonious result, and had infused into it the spirit of life. "If it were usual," he added, "to indicate one's authorities in a novel, I would willingly stud the bottom of my pages with foot-notes. And if a line from a fellow-writer remains intact in one of my pages, this simply proves that I am not hypocrite enough to hide my borrowing, which it would be so easy to conceal."

---

[1] "Rome," Paris, Charpentier and Fasquelle, 1896, 18mo, 751 pages. One hundredth thousand on sale in 1898; one hundred and sixth thousand in 1903. In the case of this book and subsequent ones, the sales from 1897 onward were largely affected by the unpopularity which Zola reaped from his participation in the Dreyfus case.

In spite of that last remark there is reason to believe that, in the case of "Rome," Zola had a difficulty in wrestling with his mountain of "notes," and that when confronted by some memorandum made many months previously, he sometimes imagined its phraseology to be his own and not the actual language of one of his authorities. It seems quite likely that if the latter had been patent to him he would have paraphrased the memorandum. With respect to the actual principle for which he contended it is obvious that the novelist possessed of any conscientiousness ought often to read up certain subjects and consult a variety of authorities. It is indeed a pity that the practice is not followed more generally, for one would then be spared the thousands of blunders in elementary questions of law, science, history, precedence, titles, etc., which appear in so much contemporary fiction.

Zola's defence with respect to "Rome" will be found in a volume called "Nouvelle Campagne,"[1] which contains a number of articles he contributed to "Le Figaro" in 1896. They are of all sorts. The first, on the opportunism of Leo XIII, foreshadows the denunciation of the Roman Catholic

---

[1] "Nouvelle Campagne," Paris, E. Fasquelle, 1897, 18mo, 296 pages.

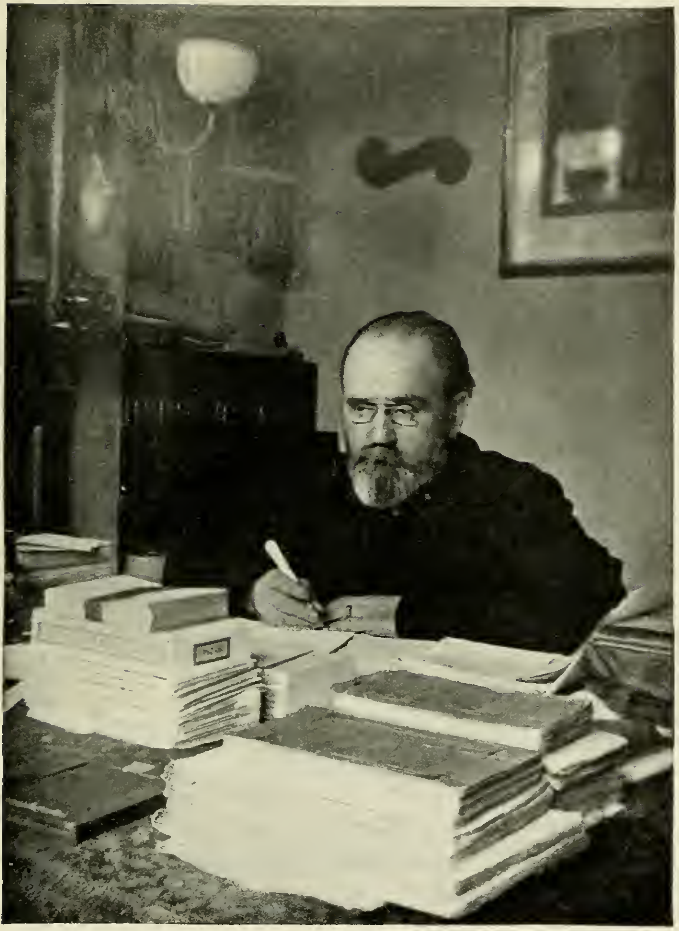


Photo by V. R. Vizetelly

Émile Zola writing "Fécondité" at Walton-on-Thames, 1898

Church which eventually appeared in "Vérité"; while another, called "Dépopulation," contains the germ of "Fécondité." There are various papers on the professional interests of literary men; a couple on Zola's love of animals, which was very marked throughout his life; and an incisive one, called "The Toad," in which he railed at the people who sent him abusive letters and the newspaper men who pursued him with pinpricks. Then, in a paper on a Parisian *clairvoyante*, a certain Mademoiselle Couesdon, who pretended to be in direct communication with the archangel Gabriel, he commented on the childishness of the imposture and deplored the senseless eagerness with which people imagined they would discover the secrets of the invisible by consulting a semi-hysterical girl. At the same time he admitted that such was the trend of the modern mind; and, after all, as people could only satisfy their yearnings in this way, one must let them do so, said he, pending the time when science would nourish the world with the bread of truth. However, the most notable article in the volume was certainly the one entitled "For the Jews," in which for the first time Zola gave expression to his surprise and disgust at the progress of anti-Semitism in France. In that campaign, the Dreyfus case, which at first had been merely an incident, was soon to become everything, for Colonel Picquart was now (July, 1896) making important discoveries which convinced him of the innocence of Dreyfus and the guilt of Esterhazy. That was as yet unknown to Zola, who did not begin to intervene until late in the autumn of the following year. Thus, in protesting against the anti-Jewish agitation which had been growing and spreading for some years past, he treated the question from a general point of view without mentioning the unhappy prisoner of Devil's Island. And here one may well call a halt to consider the state of affairs which had prompted Zola to raise his voice on behalf of a community with which he had no connection whatever, either racial or religious, but which he defended by virtue entirely of the guiding principles of his life, — the principles of truth and justice.

XIII

THE DREYFUS CASE

1894–1900

The growth of anti-Semitism in France — The Jews in Paris — The Union Générale — Drumont, "La France Juive," and "La Libre Parole" — Clerical plotting — Accusations against the Jews — Anti-Semitism in the army — Zola begins his novel "Paris" — His idea of a novel on ballet girls — "Messidor" — Facts and documents concerning Dreyfus submitted to Zola — He resolves to intervene — His articles in "Le Figaro" — His "Letter to Young Men" — He is hissed at Daudet's funeral — His "Letter to France" — The Esterhazy court-martial — Character of Esterhazy — Zola writes his letter "J'Accuse" — Some extracts from it — Its reception — Riots in the provinces and Algeria — Incidents of the turmoil in Paris — Zola prosecuted — Foreign sympathy — His counsel, Maître Labori — Clericals and Nationalists at work — The trial at the Paris Assize Court — A few of the facts it elicited — Zola mobbed — His bodyguard — Madame Zola at the trial — Zola's declaration to the jury — A glance at Labori's great speech — Reception of the verdict — Publication of "Paris" — Zola's conviction quashed — New proceedings — First trial at Versailles — Incidents of the campaign — The handwriting experts secure judgment against Zola — Zola's letter to M. Brisson — Second trial at Versailles — Zola leaves for London — His sojourn in England — His English homes — Some of his notes to Vizetelly — Death of his pet dog — His visitors — Incidents in France — Zola's return to Paris — His manifesto "Justice" — Return of Dreyfus to France — The Rennes court-martial — Zola's manifesto "The Fifth Act" — His letter to Madame Dreyfus — Dreyfus pardoned — "Fécondité" published — Zola's trial repeatedly postponed— Zola's protests against the Amnesty — His sacrifices for the cause — The medal struck in his honour.

The emancipation of the French Jews dates from the great Revolution. At the assembling of the States-General in 1789 they entered on a brief and victorious struggle, in which their chief ally, curiously enough, was a Catholic priest, the famous Abbé Grégoire. From that period until the Third Republic, established in 1870, there was never, it would seem, any really considerable Jewish question in France. A little trouble occurred in the time of the first Napoleon. Some Jews were certainly mixed up in the financial scandals of Louis Philippe's reign, and Toussenel's work, "Les Juifs, Rois de l'Époque," was the result. Rascality was occasionally manifested also by some of the Jews who became prominent in finance during the Second Empire; but the presence of the Jews generally, in the midst of the community, excited no alarm. After the war of 1870, however, the number of Jews in France increased considerably, the new arrivals being chiefly of German, Austrian, Swiss, or Alsatian nationality. Most of them settled in Paris, where they engaged in a variety of professions and avocations, showing themselves, as a rule, shrewd, hard-working, and orderly members of society. About the same time some thousands of French Jews — participating in a movement which characterised the earlier years of the Third Republic, the so-called conquest of northern by southern France — also flocked to the capital. "*Le Midi monte*" was in those days a favourite saying, echoed by Alphonse Daudet in his "Numa Roumestan" with reference to all the Gascons and Provençals who then invaded Paris and came to the front there in politics, art, literature, and social life. The descendants of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews, who in the sixteenth century had settled in southern France, at Bordeaux, Avignon, and other cities, joined in the great migration to the capital, and thus ten years after the Franco-German war there were three or four times as many Jews in Paris as there had been previously.

But they were peaceable citizens and for the most part stanch Republicans. They remembered that the Revolution had given them emancipation, and they did not desire the restoration of any monarchy which might take it from them, or of any empire with an adventurous policy which might plunge the country into war and interfere with their avocations. Many of them, no doubt, had a comparatively low ideal in view, that of quietly prospering in their business; but an element of that kind is desirable in a community like that of Paris, which numbers many firebrands in its midst. Besides, it is not too much to say that, on more than one occasion, the Jews of Paris helped to save the Republic by throwing all their influence into the balance on the side of law and order, as, for instance, during the Boulangist turmoil.

However, for some years previous to that agitation, an anti-Jewish feeling had been growing up in Paris. The ultra-Catholics, the Royalists, and other malcontents resented the spread of Jewish influence; and two financiers, named Bontoux and Féder, availed themselves of that disposition to found a great Christian Bank, the Union Générale, which, it was hoped, would deprive the Jewish — and also the Protestant — financiers of a large proportion of their customers. Pope Leo XIII blessed that bank, and invested in it some millions of francs — the fruits of Peter's pence — which the pious Bontoux promised to restore to him fourfold. But the director of the Union Générale unluckily fell out with a great financier, M. Lebaudy, the millionaire sugar refiner, who though he was nominally a Catholic cared nothing for the advancement of the Church or of the French aristocracy, which had invested large sums of money in the Bontoux bank. At last, after some prodigious Bourse gambling,—such as Zola described in "L'Argent,"—the Union Générale was smashed by M. Lebaudy, who raked in by far the greater part of the spoils.

Undoubtedly there were some Jewish and also Protestant financiers with him, but it was he who engineered the work of destruction which ruined several members of the French aristocracy, and swallowed up the savings of many good Catholics in modest circumstances who had foolishly taken financial advice from their priests. Nine out of ten attributed the disaster to the Jews exclusively, and it was virtually from that hour that people began to talk of the so-called Jewish question. It was discussed at first in the Royalist and Clerical newspapers, which pictured the Israelites as the great enemies of those who wished to restore France to her ancient kings and her ancient faith. In another way the cry was taken up by some of the Radicals and Socialists opposed to Gambetta, in whose *entourage* several Jews figured prominently. These men, it was said, had nobbled the ex-dictator and were preying upon France. Thus the "question" gradually spread, assisted largely by the many unpopular tergiversations of the Opportunist party, first in Gambetta's time, and then over a term of years, some folk detecting the hand of the Jews, precisely as others detected that of the Jesuits, in everything that happened.

Moreover books were written on the question. Under the title of "Les Rois de la République," Toussenel's forgotten work was hashed up for popular consumption; and about the time when General Boulanger was coming to the front (1886), there appeared a book called "La France Juive," written by a certain Édouard Drumont, a scholarly man, who had long dabbled in antiquarian research. It so happened that nature had given Drumont a characteristically Jewish face, while his slovenly habits had imparted to him much of the appearance of one of those "old clo'" men, who, forty or fifty years ago, still perambulated the streets of London and Paris. He has repeatedly disclaimed, however, all connection with Jewry; and his personal appearance may therefore be merely some spiteful freak on the part of nature, which has cast him in the very mould of some of those whom he loathes and denounces.

"La France Juive," which as an attack on the so-called chosen race has never been surpassed in virulence and mendacity, created an uproar in some political and financial circles; but it did not at first make much impression on the general public. The Panama scandals began, however; millions of money were lost, the victims often being needy people; and helped by the circumstance that three or four of the principal culprits in those affairs were unquestionably Jews, and by the reissue of large portions of "La France Juive" in "Le Petit Journal," Drumont and his writings achieved great notoriety. A newspaper established by him, "La Libre Parole," became the recognised organ of anti-Semitism in Paris; and as this journal was financed by a certain M. Odelin, the administrator of the famous Jesuit school in the Rue des Postes, one may conclude that at an early stage at least some part of the French clergy gave support to the agitation; for the position of M. Odelin as a mere intermediary, or man of straw, was notorious.[1]

---

[1] It was proved, in a court of justice, during the proceedings taken by the French government against the Assumptionist Fathers.

As time elapsed the attitude of the Clericals became yet more pronounced. Pope Leo XIII made advances to the French Republic. From his standpoint they may have been sincere; but in any case they tended to the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church in France. On their side, the French Reactionaries, clergy and religious orders as well as laymen, could not give any frank and loyal support to the papal policy such as it was publicly stated to be, for it was foreign to their ideas, sympathies, and aspirations. If they made some outward show of acquiescence, this was only with the secret object of obtaining the mastery by feigning friendship and afterwards destroying the Republican *régime.* But the Republic of 1848 was not forgotten; the clergy had then adhered to the new order of things the better to strangle it; and thus, in spite of all the fair words of Leo XIII and the protestations of those who professed that they had rallied to the Republic in all sincerity, the more clear-sighted Republicans, like the advanced Radicals and the Socialists, remained full of distrust. Some years elapsed before matters really took shape. At first, indeed, the Pope merely coquetted with the Republic, reserving a formal pronouncement of his adhesion until an apparently decisive moment, and the clergy worked somewhat stealthily, assisted by those university men and others who abetted or accepted the *retour offensif* of mysticism in literature. Then, as time went by, the residue of the Boulangist party raised its head to propound various theories of Nationalism, Militarism, and anti-Parliamentarism, to the last of which the Panama scandals lent some force. For many years, undoubtedly, the trend of the masses had been towards free thought, but the sentiments of Nationalism and *Chauvinisme* appealed to many. The clergy had been striving to win France back to the fold by such devices as the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Lourdes miracles, and the money-boxes of Saint Antony, but whatever success might be achieved by those means here and there, it was not great enough to satisfy priestly aspirations. To all appearance there was not sufficient faith left among the masses for supernatural considerations to influence them in the required degree. Only earthly matters seemed to interest them, and it followed, therefore, that these must be put to use. Thus the clergy aided, abetted, and finally slipped into the Nationalist movement, which seemed the one most likely to yield the desired result.

It has been indicated that the great bulk of Jewish influence had hitherto been cast on the side of the Republic; and thus, although the Freemasons and the Protestants were also regarded as enemies by the Clericals, it was felt that they might be dealt with later, and that the first thing, the principal thing, was to destroy the power of the Jews. The ground, then, was gradually prepared for a campaign. Helped by the Panama scandals, "La Libre Parole," following "La France Juive," neglected no opportunity to traduce the Jews generally.[1] The Nationalist journals joined in the outcry, pointing out that many of the Jews domiciled in France bore German names, and arguing that, although they often asserted they were Alsatians, the assertion was usually a lie. In some instances, perhaps, they conspired with foreign Jews; and at all events they formed an *im-*

---

[1] It was for a while opposed by a journal entitled "La Vraie Parole," established by Dr. Singer, subsequently the initiator of the well-known "Jewish Encyclopædia." As time elapsed "La Libre Parole" was reinforced by another scurrilous organ, "L'Anti-Juif."

perium in imperio, clinging to their own kith and kin, their particular rites and usages, leading, as it were, a life apart from the rest of the community. Briefly, they were not Frenchmen, and were therefore not entitled to a Frenchman's rights.

As a matter of fact, many thousands of the Jews domiciled in Paris did not adhere strictly to Jewish practices. In the financial world several prominent families had not only become Catholic, but had contracted matrimonial alliances with the French aristocracy; while the whole tendency of those whom one may call the Boulevardian Jews, the members of the liberal professions, the authors, journalists, artists, and actors, was towards free thought and an intermingling with the bulk of the community.[1] In fact, in the present writer's opinion, before the more violent explosion of anti-Semitism in France, Paris was the city where one saw most sign of a blending of the Jews with the rest of the population — a very slow and gradual blending, no doubt, but none the less evident to careful observers.

But that was not taken into account by the Clerical and the Nationalist leaders in the campaign which both parties carried on, not, perhaps, by virtue of any formal alliance, but because both desired an effective war-cry which would appeal to popular passions and gain them recruits. In the end the Nationalists, though they denied it, were generally directed by the leaders of the Clerical party, who were men of much greater shrewdness and ability than the Déroulèdes, the Millevoyes, the Haberts, and the Guérins, and who thus contrived, in an indirect way, to employ the Nationalist movement for their own advantage. Both parties had the same immediate object in view — the destruction of the Republic, such as it existed — and thus they could well work together; but the Clerical leaders were resolved that, whatever might be the subsequent form of government, the real mastery should belong to Holy Church. Moreover some Nationalists were Clericals also. In 1891 Déroulède, the Nationalist chief, expressly accused the Jews of trying to "dechristianise" France; and in the following year a journal belonging to Deputy Delahaye, another Nationalist, fabricated a charge of "ritual murder," perpetrated, it was alleged, at Chatellerault. A little later the Marquis de Morès, Clerical, Nationalist, and anti-Semite all in one, insulted and challenged a number of Jewish army officers. "La Libre Parole" espoused his cause, and a movement to prevent Jews from serving as officers slowly set in, leading a couple of years later to the Dreyfus case.

---

[1] The same may be said of many of the scientists.

In this connection one may remind the reader that an overwhelming proportion of the officers of the French army belonged to devout Catholic families, often aristocratic and royalist ones, which while thinking that a young man ought not to serve the government of the Republic in any political or administrative post were willing that he should accept a diplomatic appointment or join the army as an officer, for in such cases it was really France that he served, and not the hateful Republican *régime.* That distinction had been drawn already in MacMahon's time and was adhered to for many years, indeed until the clergy saw how advisable it was for their *protégés* to accept other public functions in order to fight the influence of the Jews and the Freemasons in various State departments. Thus many young men, trained by the Jesuits and others, were helped as far as possible into official positions without being restricted as previously to the diplomatic service and the army. Nevertheless, the last remained the favourite *carrière* among young aristocrats as well as among many young men of the upper *bourgeoisie;* and the great majority of these having been educated by ecclesiastics were, without doubt, prejudiced against the young Jews whom the regulations admitted among them. The prejudice was not, however, entirely religious, it was also a racial and a caste prejudice among those who belonged more or less to the old *noblesse*, and it was often in a sense patriotic, being inspired by a kind of distrust of Jewish rectitude. Indeed, even Jewish courage was questioned by some who forgot, or were not aware, that no little Jewish blood had flowed in the veins of such great fighters as Masséna, Soult, and Bernadotte.

The agitation against the French Jews had been growing slowly, then, for several years. An explosion was bound to come in any case, particularly as, with the exception of the one ministry which put down General Boulanger, the various French administrations over a lengthy period were deplorably weak. In the end the Dreyfus case became the battlefield of the parties which were contending for mastery. The outcry against the Jews was prompted, even among the Clericals, less by genuine religious motives than by political ones. The Jews were the pretext. Behind the onslaught on them, one on the Republic was being engineered. One may add that the anti-Semitism which arose in France was naturally assisted by that which prevailed in Austria and in Russia. Moreover, the Russian alliance became in certain respects a factor of importance; and the slumbering hatred of Germany on being roused in connection with Dreyfus influenced thousands of patriotic people.

Into the more intricate details of the case the writer does not propose to enter.[1] When this book was first projected he had some thought of reviewing a few curious points, but since then the victim of the great iniquity has applied for the revision of the proceedings at Rennes, and the matter is now before the judicial authorities. It is therefore best that one should confine oneself to narrating what Zola himself did to rescue Dreyfus from the hell in which he suffered for so many years — just recapitulating, as one proceeds, the facts which are essential for a proper understanding of Zola's *rôle*. At the same time one must not neglect his literary work, and the more important incidents, which, apart from the Dreyfus case, marked his career at this period.

It has been shown previously that the novelist paid little heed to the anti-Semites — whom he regarded as more turbulent than dangerous — until 1896, when he campaigned in "Le Figaro" and wrote an article entitled "For the Jews." He afterwards turned to his novel "Paris," concerning which he wrote to Vizetelly on December 11, 1896:

> "My plan is finished, and I am about to begin the book. 'Paris' will be a *novel*, full of action, on all the different 'worlds' of Paris — the political, the intellectual, the society, the working-class worlds, etc. There will be no digressions or dissertations, but as much life and action as possible. You know that I never make promises without keeping them. The story will begin to appear in 'Le Journal' between October 15 and 31 (1897), and will be published as a volume at the end of January, 1898. Try to find an English newspaper to publish it, and you may also

---

[1] For them the reader may be referred to the "Histoire de l'Affaire Dreyfus" — a masterpiece of research, literary skill, and acumen — which M. Joseph Reinach is producing in several volumes. Paris, Fasquelle.

sound the Americans, telling them that you will supply the most lively and interesting book I have yet written."

About this time Zola also gave some attention to a four-act lyrical drama entitled "Messidor,"[1] the music of which was composed by his friend M. Alfred Bruneau.[2] This work took the novelist to the Grand Opera House, where it was to be produced. He attended all the rehearsals, and evinced particular interest in the young women of the ballet, about whom — their appearance, manners, conversation, and lives — he accumulated a quantity of notes, with the object, so he afterwards told Vizetelly, of writing a novel about them, a novel which he would probably have called "Le Rat," — *rats de l'Opéra* being the name under which the minor dancers of the house have long been known in Paris. It may be mentioned that a ballet designed for expressive character-dancing was a prominent feature of "Messidor," and that success largely depended on its efficient performance. But the authors found the *corps de ballet* wedded to the stereotyped forms of stage-dancing, the customary insipid *jétés, pas de chales, entrechats, pirouettes,* and so forth. Either from incapacity or in a spirit of obstinacy, the ladies of the opera would not modify their methods, and Zola, who had dreamt of revolutionising stage-dancing, of infusing into it some of the old Grecian fervour, which expressed the various passions so powerfully, was greatly disappointed. When "Messidor" was produced on February 19, 1897, it achieved little more than a *succès d'es-*

---

[1] "Messidor" was the tenth or harvest month in the calendar of the First Republic.

[2] The writer does not know when Zola wrote the libretto of "Messidor"; but it seems likely that he did so in 1894 or 1895, for M. Bruneau must have subsequently required considerable time for the music.

time. The ballet was praised by the critics, who judged it from the customary standpoint, but it was not what the composer and Zola had desired. Of course, no other result was possible. Years would be required to effect a revolution in stage-dancing, at least at the Paris Opera House.

After the production of "Messidor," Zola confined his attention to "Paris" for several months, and it was only on quitting Médan for his town residence late in the autumn of 1897 that he began to give serious attention to the Dreyfus case. The various attempts which both the Dreyfus family, through M. Bernard Lazare, and Colonel Picquart, influenced by his own discoveries, had made in 1896 to bring about a careful inquiry into the whole affair had yielded little result; but in 1897 the matter was taken up by M. Scheurer-Kestner, a much respected vice-president of the Senate, who came to the conclusion that the offence for which Dreyfus had been convicted had really been perpetrated by Major Walsin-Esterhazy. The latter received warning of what was brewing, and about the time when Zola moved from Médan into Paris, as mentioned above, the anti-Semitic press, having espoused Esterhazy's cause, was again thundering against the Jews. Some of Zola's friends interested in the Affair — as everybody called it — spoke to him about it at length. Before long, indeed, several documents were shown him at his house, and left a deep impression on his mind. He had no personal acquaintance with the Dreyfus family; he never saw Madame Dreyfus till she appeared in court during his own trial in February, 1898; and if on a dozen occasions, at the utmost, he met M. Mathieu Dreyfus and discussed the case with him, all such interviews took place posterior to his intervention. This was based on a dispassionate study of the facts and documents laid before him. He weighed them with his usual care, exactly as he weighed the documents he collected for his books; and it must not be imagined that the charges he eventually formulated were brought in any haphazard fashion. Zola's intellect, one may repeat it, was essentially systematic, and his judgment of facts and his logical powers were exceptionally good.[1] At the time of his trial in Paris there were many gaps in his information, undoubtedly, but its full extent was not then revealed, owing to the extraordinary course imparted to the proceedings by the judge and the military men. Various facts which were not publicly divulged until much later were kept back deliberately by the novelist's counsel, Maître Labori, as a matter of strategy, and it follows that Zola's action was far less quixotic than some people then took it to be.

It has been assumed occasionally that the novelist's intervention began with his famous letter, "J'Accuse." That, of course, is an error. One day in November, 1897, while he was out walking, he met M. Fernand de Rodays, the director of "Le Figaro," and they talked of the Affair together. Zola realised that M. de Rodays had arrived at much the

---

[1] "The Westminster Gazette" published on January 16, 1898, a letter from the present writer, in which he said, *inter alia*: "I regard Zola as a man of very calm, methodical, judicial mind. He is no ranter, no lover of words for words' sake, no fiery enthusiast. . . . If ever he brings forward a theory he bases it on a mountain of evidence, and invariably subordinates his feelings to his reason. I therefore venture to say that if he has come forward in this Dreyfus case it is not because he *feels* that wrong has been done but because he is absolutely *convinced* of it. Doubtless many of the expressions in his recent letter to President Faure have come from his heart, but they were in the first place dictated by his reason. It is not for me at the present hour to speak of proofs . . . but most certainly Zola has not taken up this case without what he considers to be abundant proof."

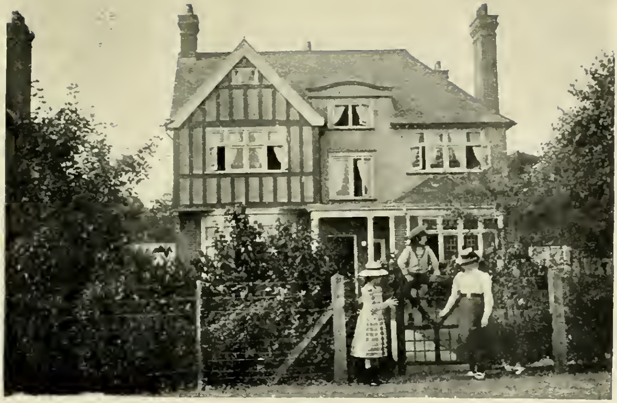


Photo by É. Zola

Penn, Oatlands Chase, Surrey
(Denise, Jacques, Violette Vizetelly)

Photo by É. Zola

Summerfield, Addlestone, Surrey

same conclusions as himself, and he thereupon offered to write some articles. M. de Rodays assented, and on November 25 — ten days after M. Mathieu Dreyfus had formally denounced Major Walsin-Esterhazy as author of the notorious *bordereau*[1] — "Le Figaro" printed a first contribution from Zola's pen, an article entitled "M. Scheurer-Kestner." On December 1 came a second, "Le Syndicat," which was followed on December 5 by a third, called "Procès-Verbal." Those articles were temperately worded; they appealed to the reader's judgment, and protested in a sober way against all attempts to inflame the popular passions. They certainly indicated a belief in Dreyfus's innocence, and asked for full inquiry; and on that account they angered the readers of "Le Figaro," who, being for the most part society people, sympathised with the Jew-baiters. Moreover the anti-Semitic and Nationalist prints, alarmed to find such a capable man as Zola espousing the cause of Dreyfus, at once attacked him savagely. He then had to withdraw from "Le Figaro," whose director, while adhering to his personal opinion in favour of Dreyfus, was unable to withstand the clamour of his readers and shareholders.

---

[1] For the assistance of the reader who may have forgotten the details of the Dreyfus case one may mention that this *bordereau* was a kind of covering note, giving a list of certain memoranda and documents on French army matters which the writer said he was then forwarding to the person whom he addressed. This person, it has always been assumed, was the German military *attaché* in Paris. At all events it was from his lodgings or from the German embassy itself that the *bordereau* reached the Secret Intelligence Department of the French Ministry of War, then directed by Colonel Sandherr, a strong anti-Semite, and Major (later Colonel) Henry. The writing of this *bordereau* was attributed to Captain Alfred Dreyfus, the only Jewish officer on the General Staff of the Army, and he, after a summary inquiry made by Major (later Colonel) du Paty de Clam, was arrested on the charge of betraying military secrets to a foreign power. Such, briefly, was the origin of the case.

As it seemed doubtful whether any other paper of standing would print what Zola might write about the case, and as he desired to retain full liberty of action, he decided to continue his campaign with pamphlets, and a first was published on December 14. It was called a "Letter to Young Men" — that is the students and others, who at one moment ran about the streets shouting "Long live the army! Down with the Jews!" and at another assembled outside the homes of M. Scheurer-Kestner and others and hooted them. Zola expostulated with these young fellows, pointed out the folly and baseness of their conduct, and exhorted them to strive for truth, humanity, and justice. He declared, too, *en passant*, that the Chamber of Deputies had just covered itself with shame by a vote of censure which it had presumed to pass on those whom it accused of "troubling the public conscience by an odious campaign," — that campaign being simply the appeal for truth and equity made by himself and others.

The pamphlet[1] stirred up the feelings of those for whom it was intended. They resented it, and began to demonstrate against Zola himself. Two days later, December 16, his good friend and fellow-novelist, Alphonse Daudet, died; and when Zola appeared as one of the pall-bearers at the funeral, so angry were the passions of the crowd that the respect due to the dead was forgotten, and groans and hisses were heard again and again as the *cortège* took its way to the cemetery of Père-Lachaise.

---

[1] "Lettre à la Jeunesse," Paris, Fasquelle, 1897, 8vo, 16 pages and cover, bearing, besides the title, the inscription: "Humanité, Vérité, Justice." Price, 10 centimes. The text is reproduced in the volume of Zola's writings on the Dreyfus case, entitled "La Vérité en Marche," which also contains the "Figaro" articles and most of the letters published in "L'Aurore," etc., until Zola ceased to take part in the Affair.

There, by the graveside, Zola read a pathetic farewell to his departed friend and comrade, of whose corpse, in accordance with usage, he had been one of the watchers a few nights previously. His hand shook as he fingered his manuscript, and there was poignant emotion in his voice when he evoked the memory not only of Daudet, but also of those who had gone before, — Flaubert and Edmond de Goncourt. "They were giants, good giants, artisans of truth and beauty," he said; "and now, great even as they were, of equal stature by virtue of the work he accomplished, Daudet has gone to join them in the grave, to repose beside them like a brother, in the same glory. We were four brothers: three have departed already, I remain alone."

Doubtless his feelings of loneliness were intensified by the groans, the cries he had heard, the ill-disguised hostility also of some of the mourners around him. But Zola was a stubborn man, great by reason of that very stubbornness. No attacks, no insults, no sufferings, could ever turn him from any purpose that he resolved upon in the plenitude of his intellect, guided by his sense of right and wrong. Soon after Daudet's funeral, that is on January 6, 1898, he issued another pamphlet, this time a "Letter to France,"[1] in which, after referring to the approaching arraignment of Major Walsin-Esterhazy before a court-martial, he protested against the violence of the press, and while disclaiming all idea of insulting the army, pointed out the dangers of militarism, the threatening shadow of the sword, which, unless France were careful, would lead her to dictatorship. Behind all else he showed the Church bent on reviving theocracy and intolerance. And with respect to the Affair itself, after complaining that the public mind had been poisoned against those who had resolved to elucidate the truth, he pointed out that if Dreyfus had been condemned on a document written by another (Esterhazy), whose guilt could be proved thereby, a revision of his case would be an imperative, logical necessity, for there could not be two persons condemned for the same crime. Besides, Dreyfus had been legally condemned on the *bordereau* alone — the only paper shown to his counsel — and even if there were other papers which in defiance of the law had been kept secret, who could refuse revision if it were proved that the *bordereau*, the one known, acknowledged document, was from the hand of another man?

---

[1] "Lettre à la France," Paris, Fasquelle, 1898, uniform with the "Lettre à la Jeunesse." An English translation of these letters and of "J'Accuse," and a further letter to General Billot, is published by John Lane, London and New York, under the title of "Zola's Letters to France." Introduction by L. F. Austin. 16mo, xiii–45 pages.

But the French War Office was determined that the authorship of the *bordereau* should not be brought home to Walsin-Esterhazy. General Saussier, Military Governor of Paris, one of the few unprejudiced army chiefs of that time, had ordered a prosecution, but the investigations were carried out by the unscrupulous General de Pellieux, behind whom was the even more unscrupulous Colonel Henry of the Intelligence Bureau, and the acquittal of Esterhazy was virtually prearranged. The charge against him — as preferred by M. Mathieu Dreyfus — was that of having written the *bordereau* for which Alfred Dreyfus had been condemned, but at the court-martial of January 10 and 11, 1898, that definite accusation was never considered. The proceedings were turned against another officer, the gallant Colonel Picquart, who had been the first to discover indications of Esterhazy's guilt. For the rest, there was a deal of nonsense about a "veiled lady" and a "liberating document"; and at last Walsin-Esterhazy was unanimously acquitted.

He was, one may remind the reader, an illegitimate descendant of a famous Hungarian house, by reason of which connection he had assumed the title of Count. Bold, clever, cunning, unscrupulous, a thorough spendthrift, he had squandered his means and much of his wife's, also, in the gambling hells of Paris. He had begun his military career as a Papal Zouave. As a French soldier he was known to have been guilty of malversation in Algeria and to have forged certificates of his own exploits. He had written infamous letters about the French army to a relative, Madame de Boulancy. He had repeatedly found himself in desperate straits financially and had then borrowed money of Jews whom he had never repaid. He had practically deserted his wife and lived with a woman known as Mademoiselle Pays, who had been an *habituée* of the notorious Parisian dancing saloon, the Moulin-Rouge. She was certainly devoted to him, and he did not hesitate to eat her bread. There is nowadays no doubt at all that he and none other perpetrated the crimes for which Dreyfus had been sentenced. He had insulted and jeered at France in his private letters, and he had sold such of her military secrets as he could discover, not once nor twice, but repeatedly, over a considerable period, to Colonel von Schwarzkoppen, the German military *attaché* in Paris, and perhaps to Colonel Panizzardi, the Italian, and Colonel Schneider, the Austrian *attaché*, also. His guilt with respect to the *bordereau* was not perhaps absolutely established at the time of his acquittal, but his frauds and his general laxity of life were well known even then. Yet he was acclaimed as the "martyr of the Jews," cheered by a delirious crowd of officers and anti-Semites, embraced in public by young Prince Henri d'Orléans as though he were the very embodiment of the national honour. And on the morrow the gallant Colonel Picquart, who had striven to prove his unworthiness, was arrested and imprisoned in the fortress of Mont Valérien.

Zola now fully realised that the military authorities were resolved on a denial of justice. They dreaded an exposure of their blunders, their lies, and their illegal practices at the time of the conviction of Dreyfus. No ordinary means could bring about a manifestation of the truth. There remained "the sacred right of insurrection," which was not to be exercised lightly, for only in a great extremity could it be justifiably put to use. In Zola's opinion such an extremity had arrived. The sole means of eliciting the truth lay in carrying the Affair from the military tribunals to a civil court of justice, where some equity might perhaps be found; but this was only to be achieved by a virtually revolutionary method. Zola felt he must employ such a method. He could not hesitate. The call of truth and justice was too imperative. At once, therefore, directly he heard of the acquittal of Esterhazy, telling nobody but his wife of his intention, Zola drew up an open letter to M. Félix Faure, the President of the Republic. It was speedily despatched to the printing firm which had already printed the "Lettre à la Jeunesse" and the "Lettre à la France," the intention being to publish it as a pamphlet. A proof was already corrected when Zola thought of giving the letter a wider publicity by issuing it in a newspaper. A Radical journal called "L'Aurore," established in 1896 by M. Ernest Vaughan, previously one of the coadjutors of Henri Rochefort, had already taken up the cause of Dreyfus in a very courageous manner. Zola therefore offered his letter to M. Vaughan, who at once decided to publish it; and though it was also printed as a pamphlet it was never offered for sale in the latter form.[1] It appeared in "L'Aurore" on the morning of January 13, 1898, with the following heading — what French journalists call technically a *manchette* — in bold type: "J'Accuse . . . !" The idea was M. Vaughan's, and though the proper title, "A Letter to the President of the Republic from Émile Zola," was duly given, it was as "J'Accuse" ("I Accuse") that the letter became known all the world over.

It was a powerful piece of writing; those who only knew the Affair by what appeared on the surface judged it at the time to be too violent, excessive, but it was fully justified by subsequent events and discoveries. After expressing solicitude for M. Félix Faure and his presidency, on which so much mud had been cast by the Affair and its abominations, and setting forth that a court-martial had just dared to acquit, by order, an Esterhazy, a supreme blow to all truth and justice, Zola declared that on his side he would dare to do something, that is speak the truth, as he did not wish to be a tacit accomplice, for in that case his nights would be haunted by the spectre of an innocent man who was expiating beyond the seas, in frightful torture, a crime he had not committed. Next came an interesting summary of the Dreyfus case, a denunciation of the extraordinary methods and machinations of Colonel du Paty de Clam, by whom Dreyfus had been arrested, an account of the support which Du Paty had received from Generals de Boisdeffre, Mercier, and Gonse, a scathing exposure of the emptiness of the indictment on which Dreyfus had been convicted, and a scornful rejection of a certain secret document about "a scoundrel named D."[1] Passing to Esterhazy's case, Zola showed Picquart unravelling the truth but thwarted in his endeavours by Generals Billot, de Boisdeffre, and Gonse, because the condemnation of Esterhazy would necessarily imply a revision of the proceedings against Dreyfus. General Billot had not been compromised in them, he was a newcomer, but had taken the crimes of others under his wing in order to save what he deemed to be the interests of the military party. However, M. Mathieu Dreyfus had denounced Esterhazy, who after being greatly alarmed, ready for suicide or flight, had all at once become audacious, having received help from "a veiled lady," otherwise Du Paty de Clam, whose work, the conviction of Dreyfus, was now seriously imperilled, and who therefore had to defend it. Then Zola referred to the struggle between Colonels du Paty and Picquart, the latter of whom was at last accused of forging a *petit bleu*, otherwise a card-telegram, in order to ruin Esterhazy, in such wise that the one honest military man in the whole Affair was made a victim. The proceedings at the Esterhazy court-martial had been iniquitous, and yet in a sense only natural, for as Zola wrote:

---

[1] Zola says in "La Vérité en Marche" that the pamphlets remained warehoused. The writer believes that they were ultimately destroyed.

---

[1] One of the points on which the new revision proceedings (1904) have been based is that the initial D was substituted in the document for another letter, probably a T.

"How could one hope that one court-martial would undo what another had done? . . . Does not the superior idea of discipline, which is in the very blood of those soldiers, suffice to weaken their capacity for equity? Whoever says discipline says obedience. When the Minister of War, the supreme chief, had publicly established, amid the acclamations of the National Representatives [the Chamber of Deputies] the authority of a decided case [*la chose jugée*], could one expect that a court-martial would give him the lie direct? . . . General Billot had given the judges [of Esterhazy] a hint, and they gave their decision in the same way as they might go into battle, that is, without arguing. The preconceived opinion which they brought to the bench was evidently this: 'Dreyfus was convicted of treason by a court-martial; he is therefore guilty, and we, as a court-martial, cannot declare him innocent; we know that to proclaim the guilt of Esterhazy would be to proclaim the innocence of Dreyfus.' Nothing could move them from this view.

"They have pronounced an iniquitous sentence which will forever weigh on our courts-martial, and cast suspicion on all their decisions. The first court-martial [that on Dreyfus] may have been wanting in intelligence, the second [on Esterhazy] was criminal, perforce. Its excuse, I repeat, is that the supreme chief had spoken, declaring the *chose jugée* to be unassailable, holy, and superior to man, in such wise that subordinates dared not affirm the contrary. People speak of the honour of the army, they wish us to love and respect it. Ah! certainly, yes, the army which would rise at the first threat, which would defend our French soil, the army which is compounded of the whole people, for that we have only affection and respect. But it is no question of that army, for the dignity of which we are justly anxious in our desire for justice. It is a question of the sword, the master that may be given us, perhaps, to-morrow. And to kiss devoutly the hilt of the sword, the fetish — no!

"As I have shown, the Dreyfus Affair was the War Office Affair. An officer of the Staff, denounced by his comrades on the

Staff, and condemned by the pressure of the Chiefs of the Staff, cannot come back as an innocent man without virtually showing the whole Staff to be guilty. And so the War Office, by every imaginable means, by campaigns in the press, by communications, by influence, has screened Esterhazy in order to ruin Dreyfus a second time. Ah! what a vigorous sweep the Republican Government ought to effect in that Jesuits' den, as General Billot himself once styled it! Where can we find a truly strong and wisely patriotic Ministry daring enough to recast and renew it entirely? How many are the people who, at the thought of war, tremble with anguish, knowing in what hands the national defence is placed! And what a den of base intrigue, tittle-tattle, and waste has been made of that sacred asylum, where the fate of the country is decided! We are scared by the terrible light cast upon it by the Dreyfus Affair, that human sacrifice of an unfortunate man, a 'dirty Jew!' Ah! what a seething there has been there of madness and folly, silly fancies, practices only fit for some base police service, customs worthy of the inquisition and despotism, the good pleasure of a few gold-braided individuals setting their heels on the nation, and stifling its cry for truth and justice, under the mendacious and sacrilegious pretext of the interest of the State!"

Then, after censuring the press and the riff-raff of Paris, which supported the evil-doers, Zola declared it was a crime to poison the minds of the poor and lowly, to inflame reactionary passions and intolerance, sheltered the while behind that odious anti-Semitism of which France — the great France of the Rights of Man — would die if she were not cured of it. "It is a crime," he added, "to exploit patriotism for works of hatred, and finally it is a crime to make the sword one's God, when all human science is working for the coming sway of truth and justice." Next he praised M. Scheurer-Kestner, the great, good, upright man who, in his honest simplicity, had believed that a statement of the truth would suffice for justice to be done, and who was cruelly punished for his delusion. In like way Colonel Picquart, in reward for his scrupulousness and respectfulness, was covered with mud by his superiors. "One even saw this ignoble thing," said Zola, referring to Colonel Picquart, "a French tribunal, after allowing the prosecuting counsel to heap charges on a witness, to accuse him publicly of every kind of transgression, ordered the court to be cleared directly that witness was called in to explain and defend himself. I declare that this is one crime the more, a crime which will rouse the public conscience. Decidedly, the military tribunals have a strange idea of justice!"

Then after a final appeal to President Faure, who if he were the prisoner of the Constitution and his *entourage*, still had to discharge the duties of a man, Zola declared that he in no wise despaired of triumph, for truth was on the march and nothing would stop it. The Affair was only beginning. On one side were the guilty who wished to withhold the light; on the other the servants of justice who would lay down their lives in order that it might appear. When truth was buried underground, it gathered strength there, acquired such explosive force that on bursting forth it blew up everything. One would see, then, if present secrecy had not prepared the most resounding of disasters for some future date. And Zola concluded:

> "I accuse Lieutenant-Colonel du Paty de Clam of having been the diabolical author of the judicial error, unconsciously I am willing to believe, and of having defended his baleful work for three years by the most absurd and culpable machinations. I accuse General Mercier of having rendered himself an accomplice, at least through want of firmness, in one of the greatest iniquities of the century.

I accuse General Billot of having held positive proofs of the innocence of Dreyfus, and of having suppressed them, of having perpetrated this crime against humanity and against justice with a political object, and in order to save the compromised Staff. I accuse General de Boisdeffre and General Gonse of having become accomplices in the same crime, the former doubtless from clerical passion,[1] the other, perhaps, from that *esprit de corps* which makes the War Office a sacred and unassailable ark. I accuse General de Pellieux and Major Ravary of having made a wicked inquiry, that is an inquiry of the most monstrous partiality, of which we have, in the latter's report, an imperishable monument of naïve audacity. I accuse the three handwriting experts,[2] Sieurs Belhomme, Varinard, and Couard, of having made lying and fraudulent reports, unless medical examination should prove that they suffer from diseased sight and judgment. I accuse the War Office of having carried on in the press, particularly in 'L'Éclair' and 'L'Echo de Paris,' an abominable campaign in order to mislead public opinion and screen its transgressions. Lastly I accuse the first court-martial of having violated the law by condemning an accused man on a document which was kept secret; and I accuse the second court-martial of having covered that illegality by order; in its turn committing the judicial crime of knowingly acquitting a guilty person.

"In preferring these charges I am not ignorant of the fact that I expose myself to the penalties of Clauses 30 and 31 of the Press Law of July 29, 1881, which punishes libel. And it is voluntarily that I expose myself. As for the men whom I accuse, I do not know them. I have never seen them. I have no resentment or hatred against them. They are for me mere entities, spirits of social maleficence. And the act which I accomplish here is only a revolutionary means of hastening the explosion of truth and justice. I have but one passion — one for light, in the name of humanity, which has suffered so much, and which has a right to happiness. My passionate protest is but the cry of my soul. Let them have the courage to bring me before an Assize Court, and let the inquiry be held in broad daylight! I wait."

---

[1] General de Boisdeffre, the Head of the General Staff, was a devout Catholic and an extreme anti-Semite. He had been French ambassador in Russia and it was there that his hatred of the Jews had taken birth. Boisdeffre did not place Dreyfus on the General Staff, but found him on it upon taking office, the appointment having been made by Boisdeffre's predecessor, General de Miribel. Boisdeffre was largely under the thumb of Father du Lac, a Jesuit, his confessor, to whom he repeatedly confided matters connected with his duties.

[2] Those experts asserted that Dreyfus had traced the *bordereau* from Esterhazy's handwriting in order to saddle him with the guilt of it.

This manifesto threw Paris into a state of uproar. Three hundred thousand copies of the number of "L'Aurore" containing it were sold,[1] and long extracts were reproduced by "Le Siècle," "La Petite République," and the few other newspapers which supported the cause of Dreyfus: the great bulk of the press, it should be mentioned, being on the other side. The Clericalists in particular now threw off all disguise. That same afternoon Count Albert de Mun, the Papal Nuncio's henchman, "interpellated" the government in the Chamber of Deputies, and by 312 votes against 122 carried a resolution calling on the authorities to put a stop to "the attacks on the honour of the army." The Prime Minister, M. Méline, announced on this occasion that it had been decided to prosecute Zola, but this hardly satisfied the more ardent Clericalists, one of whom, M. de Pontbriand, deputy for Nantes and an acolyte of the Archbishop of Paris, suggested a few days afterwards that all the members of the Dreyfus family and the leaders of the "Jew Syndicate"[2] should be cast into Mazas at once! Moreover, a public meeting held at the Tivoli Hall was largely attended by priests, Christian brothers, and seminarists of Saint Sulpice, who were granted special leave for the occasion; and long and eager were the shouts of "Down with the Jews!" raised by these ecclesiastics, who were finally routed by some Anarchists among the audience.

---

[1] A good many copies were bought by anti-Dreyfusites and burnt publicly in the streets.

[2] There never was such a syndicate. Said Zola to Vizetelly more than once: "It is a thousand pities there was none! Half the journalists who denounced us lived on bribes and blackmail. They would willingly have sold themselves. In fact, in some instances, indirect suggestions to that effect were made in the belief that we really had a syndicate and millions of francs

During the ensuing fortnight demonstrations and riots took place in various parts of France, notably in cities where the priestly cause was strongly represented: Lyons, the city of Notre Dame de Fourvières; Marseilles, the city of Notre Dame de la Garde; Nantes, which had sent the anti-Semitic Pontbriand to represent it in parliament, and Bordeaux, where clericalism likewise numbered many adherents. Still more serious disturbances followed in Algeria, where Jews were beaten, wounded, in a few cases actually killed, their houses and shops sacked, and a quantity of their property burnt, or, in some instances at Algiers, thrown into the sea. Meanwhile Paris was in a state of turmoil, full of shouting crowds who, when they were not demonstrating before some Dreyfusite newspaper office, acclaimed every uniform with the cry of "Vive l'armée!" and pursued every suspicious nose with that of "Down with the Jews!" Zola was hooted under his windows, a few of which were broken, and the police had to protect his house. At the same time, while there was no little ferocity and violence, a great deal of *Chauvinisme*, as well as abundant hypocrisy and cowardice in certain political and *bourgeois* circles, the Esterhazy court-martial had quite disgusted a number of sensible,

at our disposal. I know that several prominent Jewish financiers paid large sums at the time to have their names kept out of the newspapers."

educated, thinking people, and ten members of the Institute of France, eight professors of the Paris Faculty of Medicine, a dozen of the Sorbonne, the Collége de France, and the École Normale, who were joined by numerous professors of provincial faculties and a good many scientific and literary men, now for the first time declared in favour of a revision of the Dreyfus case, thus bringing a welcome support to the cause for which Yves Guyot, Jean Jaurès, Francis de Pressensé, Georges Clemenceau, Joseph Reinach, Raoul Allier, and others were fighting in the press. This accession of strength to the Dreyfusite cause was greeted with sneers by the professional Jew-baiters, the Clericalist leaders, and the retrograde *littérateurs* of the Brunetière *coterie* who led or influenced the majority of the Parisians. They nicknamed their adversaries "the intellectuals," applying the word derisively; but it was a welcome nickname, and one well deserved by the little party of sensible men which counted in its ranks such notabilities as Bréal, Berthelot, Duclaux, Giry, Grimaux, Réville, Havet, Trarieux, Monod, Ranc, Passy, Paul Meyer, Anatole France, and Leroy-Beaulieu.

On January 20 Zola at last received a copy of the citation, which at the suit of the War Minister, General Billot, summoned him and M. Perrenx, the nominal manager of "L'Aurore," before the Assize Court of the Seine to answer, not the long string of charges contained in the letter to President Félix Faure, but only fifteen lines of it — those which denounced the Esterhazy court-martial for having acquitted the major "by order." All the rest was ignored. The desire of the military authorities was evident, they still wished to prevent any discussion of the Dreyfus case. Zola thereupon wrote to General Billot reiterating all his charges, but the only effect of this letter, which appeared in "L'Aurore," was to induce the three handwriting experts, Belhomme, Varinard, and Couard, to bring an action against the novelist claiming damages for libel. On January 22 the conduct of the military authorities in shirking Zola's principal accusations was raised in the Chamber of Deputies,[1] and wild uproar and fighting ensued until order was restored by the military guard. Two days later Count von Bulow, the German Foreign Secretary, declared in the Reichstag: "Between Captain Dreyfus and any German organs or authorities, no relations of whatever kind have ever existed." The Italian and Austrian governments made similar declarations; but nothing could check the folly of the French Militarists, or even of the Government, which well knew through the diplomatic agents of France abroad that in every court and chancellery of Europe Dreyfus was regarded as innocent and Esterhazy believed to be guilty. The foreign press shared that view, and expressions and testimonials of sympathy began to reach Zola from all parts of the world.[2] He received them gratefully; but could the sympathy of foreigners afford adequate solace when four out of every six Parisians were covering him with mud? Besides, that very sympathy led to yet more virulent attacks on him. It was fitting, said his enemies, that he should be

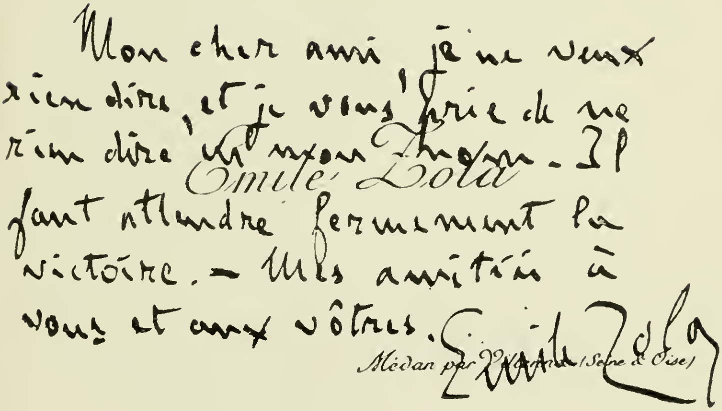
---

[1] The discussion was originally raised by M. Cavaignac, one of the evil geniuses of the Republican party, *apropos* of an alleged confession made by Dreyfus to an officer of gendarmerie, but M. Jaurès, the Socialist leader, profited by the opportunity to bring forward the prosecution of Zola.

[2] Mr. David Christie Murray, the novelist, gave a very interesting lecture on the *bordereau* at the Egyptian Hall in London, generously placed at his disposal by Mr. Maskelyne. In the course of his remarks Mr. Murray strongly praised Zola's attitude, pointing out that after toiling through poverty, privation, and obloquy, to fame and wealth, he braved imprisonment and ruin out of pure pity and love of justice.

Penn, from the Garden

É. Zola Miss & Mrs. Vizetelly



Emile Zola

Mon cher ami, je ne veux rien dire, et je vous prie de ne rien dire en mon nom. – Il faut attendre fermement la victoire. – Mes amitiés à vous et aux vôtres. Emile Zola

Médan par Villennes (Seine & Oise)

Facsimile card from Zola to Vizetelly

supported by foreigners, who for the most part rejoiced to see the French army attacked and insulted! Well, he was welcome to their support. France cared nothing what foreigners might say. She would settle her own affairs in her own manner, regardless of the opinions of this man Zola, who was himself a foreigner, some kind of dirty Italian.

He had entrusted his defence to an advocate still young in years, esteemed by all who knew him, but not as yet of high public reputation. Born at Rheims, of Alsatian parents, his father being one of the chief inspectors of the East of France Railway Company, Maître Labori had married a lady of Irish extraction, at one time well known in London musical circles. He was possessed of a tall, commanding figure, a bright, sunny face, a warm, penetrating voice. And he was not only very talented and extremely courageous, but he had the best of qualifications for the task he undertook: he believed absolutely in the innocence of Dreyfus; and thus he threw himself into the struggle with a whole-hearted devotion. The reader who knows something of the great fight he made both for Zola and for the unhappy Jewish officer, may be surprised to learn that if Maître Labori made himself a great name during that struggle, he reaped little or no immediate pecuniary gain. Zola's being a genuine political case, he would take no fee; he was only willing to accept a comparatively modest sum for his expenses and the services of the young advocates, his secretaries. In this he was following one of the lofty traditions on which the French bar prides itself. Berryer asked no fee when he defended either the ministers of Charles X or Louis Napoléon before the peers of Louis Philippe's time; Jules Favre asked none, whether he defended Orsini or other conspirators, or one of the many journalists or politicians arraigned during the Second Empire. The same may be said of Joly, who defended Henri Rochefort; of Gambetta when he defended Delescluze, and of many others. Occasionally a present in kind may be accepted by counsel; and from a few words that Zola once let fall, the writer thinks that Maître Labori may have been eventually persuaded to accept the title-deed of a little property which several of those indebted for his services thought of purchasing and presenting to him.

At the suit of Zola and his fellow-defendant nearly a hundred witnesses — ministers, officers, deputies, senators, diplomatists, authors, journalists, handwriting experts, and others — were summoned to appear at the approaching trial; but great efforts were made to prevent many from attending. Directly the jury-roll was issued, the names and addresses of those who might have to pronounce on the case were published by "Le Petit Journal" and other scurrilous prints; and numerous threatening letters were sent to these men, intimating that vengeance would follow if they should dare to acquit "the Italian." Moreover the Nationalist and Clerical leaders prepared for demonstrations on a large scale. A kind of employment office was established on the boulevards, where hirelings were engaged at the rate of five francs a day or two francs an evening to shout "Vive l'armée," "À bas les Juifs," and "Conspuez Zola!" These men met with little or no interference from the authorities, who contented themselves with massing police and municipal guards in and around the Palais de Justice.

The trial began on February 7. The Assize Court was crowded, Nationalists and anti-Semites preponderating among the audience. There were fifteen sittings altogether, the last being held on February 23. The presiding judge, M. Delegorgue,[1] did his utmost to prevent the witnesses from giving evidence respecting the Dreyfus case; and again and again, when Maître Labori wished to ask a question, Delegorgue snappishly exclaimed: "The question shall not be put!" Nevertheless the judge could not prevent the witnesses and Labori from establishing a number of facts—among others the illegality of Dreyfus's condemnation, the insignificance of the evidence upon which he had been officially condemned, the error committed by the military judges in respect of the *bordereau,* and the certainty that it was Esterhazy's work. The evidence was, indeed, of such immense significance that the General Staff thought it necessary to strike a decisive blow. General de Pellieux gave the jury a summary of a forged correspondence between Colonels von Schwarzkoppen and Panizzardi, the former German and Italian military *attachés,* this correspondence, in which Dreyfus was mentioned, having been manufactured by a certain Lemercier-Picard with the knowledge of the notorious Colonel Henry. General de Boisdeffre, however, virtually certified its authenticity, and at the same time threatened the jury with the resignation of the whole General Staff if Zola were acquitted. Then Colonel Henry and Major Lauth accused Picquart of having asserted Dreyfus's innocence without knowledge of the papers in the case, and of having invented one of them in order to ruin Esterhazy. Maître Labori was not allowed to question the generals, or answer them. Great indignation was expressed when Picquart had the courage to say that a Panizzardi-Schwarzkoppen letter mentioned by General de Pellieux was a forgery. Yet not only was such the case, but some weeks previously the forgery had been revealed to the embassies of Italy and Germany, most probably by Lemercier-Picard, the forger himself. Count Tornielli and Count Münster in their turn had revealed it to M. Hanotaux, the French Foreign Minister, demanding his word of honour that no use should be made of it. M. Hanotaux communicated this revelation to his colleagues, and even sent a written note about it to the Ministry of War. It has been said, too, that on the day after General de Pellieux's deposition M. Hanotaux proposed to suspend the proceedings in Zola's trial in order to look for and prosecute the forgers, but that his fellow-ministers hesitated from fear of a military movement. Anyhow, the episode ended disastrously for Lemercier-Picard. On March 3 he was found hanging in his room, his feet dangling on the floor. All his papers had disappeared before the police came to take possession of the corpse. Yet, according to the authorities, it was a case of suicide![1]

---

[1] He was the son of a certain Delegorgue, who after being known as the "elephant hunter" in the days of Louis Philippe, became a great friend of Alfred de Musset with whom he often played chess at the Café de la Régence.

The trial was full of stirring episodes. The Nationalists who crowded the court vented their passions freely, shouting, jeering, and groaning at almost everybody who expressed any view favourable to Dreyfus or derogatory to the swaggering, gold-laced officers, who when questioned either refused to answer or perjured themselves with the audacity of men confident of impunity. Zola, who was insulted day after day, put a brave face on it all, and only on a few occasions did he give utterance to his disgust, protesting against the manner in which he was mobbed in the streets, and against the denial of justice which he encountered in court, where he claimed the same liberty to defend himself as was accorded to thieves and assassins. At one sitting, when General de Pellieux made a slighting remark, the novelist turned on him haughtily: "There are several ways of serving France," said he. "A man may do so with the sword or with the pen. If you have won victories, so have I. I bequeath the name of Émile Zola to posterity, which will choose between us!" De Pellieux made no retort to those proud words. In that hour of mendacious triumph he did not foresee the day when he would be virtually disgraced, consigned to an obscure garrison in Brittany, to die there, tortured, as we know, by the deepest remorse. Again, at one moment towards the close of the trial, when the storm of execration thundered more loudly than usual in Zola's ears, the novelist turned towards the bellowers, and with one word branded them: "You cannibals!" he cried, "you cannibals!"

---

[1] In the above passage the able summary of the Dreyfus case (by Sir Godfrey Lushington, it has been said) published by "The Times," October 14, 1898, has been followed. For all the details of Zola's trial, see "Le Procès Zola, Compte Rendu *in extenso*," etc., 2 vols., 8vo, Paris, Stock, 1898.

Except on two or three occasions when the rain fell in torrents, great precautions had to be taken for Zola's safety. Senator Ranc, an old conspirator and no mean judge of danger, subsequently stated that to his knowledge the novelist repeatedly had some very narrow escapes. The carriage in which he drove to and from the Palais de Justice was often pursued by a hostile mob, which the police had to charge and disperse. On some occasions policemen mounted on bicycles escorted the carriage, and Zola was always accompanied by a little body-guard of friends: M. Fasquelle, his publisher, M. Bruneau, the composer, and particularly M. Fernand Desmoulin, the accomplished engraver, to whom one owes a fine portrait of Zola, produced at the time when the Rougon-Macquart series was completed. Throughout the tumultuous period of the trial M. Desmoulin was invariably by his friend's side with a six-shooter in readiness. Madame Zola, who also attended the proceedings, was in like way escorted by vigilant friends. The horror of it all had at first seemed more than she could bear, but she strove to be brave and calm. After all, as she repeated, her husband was doing his duty.

On the thirteenth day of the trial, after the speech for the prosecution, Zola read an address to the jury, in which, after referring to all the pressure employed to secure his conviction, he sketched broadly and graphically the situation into which the Affair had cast France. He denied that he had insulted the army: those who had done so were the men who mingled with their acclamations the cry of "Down with the Jews!" "And they have even shouted, 'Vive Esterhazy!'" he added. "Great God! the nation of Saint Louis, of Bayard, of Condé, and of Hoche; the nation that can boast a hundred gigantic victories; the nation of the great wars of Republican and Imperial days; the nation whose strength, grace, and generosity have dazzled the world, has shouted 'Long live Esterhazy!' That is a stain of which only our effort for truth and justice can wash us clean." Then after speaking sarcastically of the alleged "Jewish Syndicate," said to have been formed to bribe people and buy evidence, he appealed to the common sense of the jury, warning them they would make a great mistake if they imagined that the campaign would be stopped by any verdict of guilty in his case. As for himself, he shrugged his shoulders at the insinuations that he had sold himself to the Jews, that he was a liar and a traitor. Then he continued:

> "I have no political, no sectarian passions. I am a writer. I have toiled all my life, and shall return to the ranks to-morrow to resume my interrupted work. How stupid it is of some to call me an Italian, I the son of a French mother, brought up by Beauceron grandparents. . . . I lost my father when I was seven years old and did not visit Italy till I was fifty-four. . . . Still that does not prevent me from feeling very proud that my father belonged to Venice, the resplendent city whose ancient glory rings through every mind. But, even if I were not French, would not the forty volumes in the French language which I have scattered by millions of copies throughout the world, would not they suffice to make me a Frenchman, one useful to the glory of France?"

Having thus dealt with the personal question, Zola proceeded to plead for Dreyfus, for equity and enlightenment which alone could restore peace and order in France. And, asking the jurymen if they wished to see France isolated in Europe, he showed them the foreign nations already casting doubts on French humanity and equity. Next, amid increasing interruptions, he continued as follows:

> "Alas! gentlemen, like so many others, you await perhaps a flash of lightning, the proof of the innocence of Dreyfus descending from heaven like a thunderbolt. Truth does not come upon us in that way; as a rule, some research and intelligence are needed to find her. (Jeers.) The proof! Ah! we well know where it might be found. But it is only in the depths of our souls that we think of that, and our patriotic anguish proceeds from a dread lest France should have exposed herself to receiving that proof as a slap, after compromising the honour of her army

by a lie. (Loud protests.) But I wish to declare plainly that if we notified to the prosecution the names of certain members of foreign embassies as witnesses, we had no intention of summoning those persons to this court. Some people smiled at our audacity. But I do not think that anybody smiled at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for there they must have understood our object. (Protests.) We merely wished to indicate to those who know the whole truth that we knew it also. It is circulating in all the embassies, it will soon be known to everybody. . . . The Government which is ignorant of nothing, the Government which, like ourselves, is convinced of the innocence of Dreyfus (Loud protests.) can, without any risk, and whenever it pleases, find witnesses who will at last throw light on everything.

"Dreyfus is innocent, I swear it. (The proof! The proof!) I stake my life on it, I stake my honour on it. At this solemn hour, in presence of this tribunal which represents human justice, before you, gentlemen of the jury, who personify the nation, before all France, before the whole world, I swear that Dreyfus is innocent. (Uproar.) And by my forty years of labour, by the authority which that labour may have given me, I swear that Dreyfus is innocent. (Violent protests.) And by all I have acquired, by the name I have made for myself, by my works which have contributed to the expansion of French literature, I swear that Dreyfus is innocent. (Protests and hisses.) May all that crumble, may my works perish, if Dreyfus is not innocent. He is innocent! (Prolonged uproar.)

"Everything seems to be against me, the two Chambers, the civil authorities, the military authorities, the newspapers which circulate the most widely, and public opinion which they have poisoned. And on my side I have only an ideal of truth and justice. And I am quite easy in mind, for I shall conquer. I did not wish my country to remain amid mendacity and injustice. You may strike me here. France will some day thank me for having helped to save her honour." (General tumult. Repeated shouts of "The proof! Give the proof!")

Zola, as we know, was not an orator. Emotion made his voice tremble as he began to read his declaration, but composure gradually came to him, followed towards the close by real strength of manner. And though, as the foregoing extracts indicate, many sentences were followed by violent protests and ridiculous shouts of "Proof! proof!" — ridiculous by reason of the fact that the judge and the military witnesses had done their utmost to prevent any proof from being supplied — the audience listened with great attention. Once Zola's voice cracked as he tried to give emphasis to a word, and his listeners then jeered him, but, on the whole, he did far better than had been expected by those who knew how difficult it was for him to speak in public.

He was followed by Maître Labori, who had fought most manfully and skilfully throughout the whole proceedings, and who now speedily subdued the hostile and noisy audience. Whenever, at the outset of his great speech, the Nationalists laughed at a statement or an argument, counsel repeated it in a yet more emphatic manner than before. Groans arose when, referring to his client, he said: "A patriot like Zola"; and at once, turning like a lion, he repeated the words: "Yes, a patriot like Zola — a patriot with a braver heart, a clearer vision, a loftier love of his own land than is owned by any of the shallow-minded swallowers of phrases who rage at him. One of these days you will recognise your own folly and his greatness." Then the brave advocate paused for a few seconds, as if challenging a new outburst. But there was complete silence. "Ah, well, then," he said, with a touch of fighting laughter in his voice, "I will continue." And having conquered his audience he reverted to his argument. His address was continued on the morrow, February 22, when, demonstrating the accuracy of Zola's assertion that Dreyfus was innocent, he showed that the whole procedure of the 1894 trial had been carried out by officers whose excitement of mind had verged on positive derangement, and that it was consequently valueless. Towards the end of his argument, which was very close and pregnant, the anti-Semites once more became uproarious, but the manifestations against the advocate brought on counter-manifestations in his favour from the Dreyfusites, who had mustered in some force that day. The account of Dreyfus's degradation, the unhappy man's letters and protests, which Maître Labori read, produced a powerful impression. When he referred to the extraordinary traps which Du Paty de Clam had set in the hope of extracting from his prisoner something which might be interpreted as a confession, everybody seemed suddenly won over to the Dreyfusite cause; and acclamations again followed a passage in which counsel reminded those in high places, who assumed such a hypocritical "*non possumus*" attitude towards the case, that the most pilloried and execrated name in all history was that of Pontius Pilate. Again, on the morrow, Maître Labori took up the thread of his discourse, which ended with a fine peroration. But this time, the Dreyfusites being altogether outnumbered, vehement protests mingled with the applause which saluted him. After M. Clemenceau had spoken amid frequent tumultuous interruptions for Zola's fellow-defendant, M. Perrenx of "L'Aurore," the jurors withdrew to consider their verdict which, by a majority of *seven to five,*[1] was one of guilty. It was seven o'clock in the evening; the court-room, the whole Palais de Justice indeed, its precincts and the adjoining streets, were crowded with people among whom the professional anti-Semites and many officers were conspicuous. Yells of triumph greeted the news of the verdict, and were renewed when it was known that in Zola's case the maximum penalty of a year's imprisonment with a fine of three thousand francs had been applied.[1] And there came loud and ominous shouts of "Death to the Jews! death to the dirty Jews!" followed by scuffles and affrays which the police, two thousand in number, could scarcely check.

---

[1] In France it is not necessary for all twelve jurymen to be of the same mind.

Zola took his sentence quietly, his wife fell weeping on his neck and his friends surrounded him, pressing his hands. At last he was smuggled out of court and carried to a friend's house, where he spent the evening, while half Paris was demonstrating in one and another direction. The verdict and sentence were naturally approved by the great majority of people who, having as yet no notion that several officers of the General Staff had deliberately perjured themselves, still put all their trust in those brave defenders of the country. On the following day, however, the foreman of the jury stated, significantly enough, that the verdict had been given on the sole ground that Zola had gone beyond what was permissible by insulting a court-martial. As for the revision of the Dreyfus case, he, the foreman, was not opposed to it, indeed he hoped it would be brought about by legal means. Thus the triumph of the Militarists was really only surface deep.

---

[1] M. Perrenx was sentenced to the same fine and four months' imprisonment.

Zola gave notice of appeal on various grounds, and then turned to his novel "Paris," the last proofs of which he had quietly corrected during the interval between his letter, "J'Accuse," and his trial. The work was originally to have appeared in January, but was delayed by Zola's participation in the Dreyfus case. Writing to Vizetelly on February 6, the evening before he went into court, he said: "'Paris,' will only be published on March 1. Please therefore warn Mr. Chatto at once and tell him that this date is final. . . . I am not of your opinion.[1] I think that the book will be more successful if we allow the public emotion to calm down a little. Besides, we shall not be ready till March 1."

"Paris," which had been appearing serially in "Le Journal," was issued, then, on that date.[2] In France the sales were small, for many who had long read Zola with approval now turned from the alleged insulter of the army, the defender of Jewish traitors. But the demand from abroad, whence addresses of sympathy had been raining upon the novelist for six weeks past, was a large one, and thus he did not immediately suffer any great pecuniary loss from his championship of an obnoxious cause. Unfortunately the lessons which the work inculcated scarcely reached those for whom they were primarily intended, that is the Parisians themselves, all "good patriots" having now agreed to shun Zola and his works.

A period of less disorder but of much controversy, marked by some more revelations, followed his trial. Then on

---

[1] At the request of the English publishers Vizetelly had written suggesting that the book ought to be published as soon as possible, that is, while the author's case was attracting so much attention.

[2] "Paris," Fasquelle, 1898, 18mo, 608 pages. Some copies on Dutch and other special papers; a few presentation ones in 2 vols., 8vo. Eighty-eighth thousand in 1899; ninety-fourth thousand in 1903.

April 2, the Cour de Cassation, having examined his appeal, quashed his conviction on the ground that the proceedings ought to have been instituted, not by the Minister of War, but by the court-martial which he had been accused of libelling. This decision quite enraged the military authorities. The court-martial in question became alarmed and almost shrank from taking proceedings, but pressure was put on it by General de Pellieux and others who on April 8 prevailed on its members to take the necessary action, and at the same time apply to the Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honour to strike Zola off the roll — a suggestion which the ineffable Drumont had repeatedly made in "La Libre Parole." When on April 11 Zola received a fresh citation, he found that he was summoned before the Versailles Assizes, and that only *three* lines of his famous letter, "J'Accuse," were now incriminated! The trial was fixed for May 23, on which day anti-Semites and Dreyfusites flocked to Versailles. But Maître Labori impeached the jurisdiction of the court on the ground that Zola's offence had been committed in a newspaper printed and published in Paris, and on a decision being given against him, the Cour de Cassation was again appealed to. A further delay then ensued.

On May 29, however, an ignoble attack was made on Zola by a certain Ernest Judet of "Le Petit Journal," in which he had been carrying on an unscrupulous campaign against the cause of justice. The attack took the form of some alleged revelations respecting the novelist's father, who was said to have been a thief. Judet printed documents derived from somebody at the War Office — presumably Colonel Henry — which were subsequently shown to have been doctored or forged; and the story which he told, in his own fashion, was that of François Zola's connection with the French Foreign Legion. It has been dealt with in the first chapter of this volume; but the incident must be mentioned here, for it gave the accused man's son a great and painful shock. The undoubted object of this infamous publication was to discredit his efforts on behalf of Dreyfus and to damn him in public opinion. But Zola retorted with a glowing protest in "L'Aurore," and before long he and Judet were prosecuting one another for libel. The sequel will be told hereafter.

Pending the decision in the second appeal made to the Cour de Cassation, the turmoil in France continued. Numerous illegal and iniquitous acts were perpetrated, professors who had espoused the cause of justice were summarily dismissed, Colonel Picquart was turned out of the army, M. Joseph Reinach lost his rank as an officer of reserves, the General Staff virtually ruling the country in spite of the various discoveries and revelations which tended, in an increasing degree, to prove the innocence of Dreyfus and the guilt of Esterhazy. At the general elections, which supervened about this time, only a few candidates, such as M. Jaurès and M. Reinach, dared to speak of justice. It was a fear of those elections and the constituencies that had previously led many deputies to shrink from the cause of revision. However, though the Nationalists gained by the elections, they did not swamp the Republic. M. Méline, falling from power, was replaced as Prime Minister by M. Brisson, and General Billot as War Minister by M. Cavaignac. This politician, a man of some ability but much greater self-conceit, imagined that he would put an end to the Affair once and for all. On July 7, primed with papers provided by Colonel Henry and in which he foolishly believed, he delivered an extraordinary speech which the Chamber of Deputies enthusiastically ordered to be placarded throughout France. In this effusion, in which Dreyfus was alleged to have confessed his guilt, use was again made of the Schwarzkoppen-Panizzardi forgeries, as well as of the paper about a spy called D, to which reference has been made previously. According to Cavaignac, those documents ended the affair for ever, and Zola therefore might be finally judged and condemned.

The novelist's appeal on the question of jurisdiction had been rejected on June 16, a new trial at Versailles being fixed for July 18. In the interval, that is on July 9, two days after Cavaignac's declarations, the three handwriting experts succeeded in the proceedings they had brought against Zola for libel. He was sentenced to undergo two months' imprisonment, to pay a fine of two thousand francs, and damages to the extent of five thousand francs to each plaintiff. But an appeal being entered, execution did not follow immediately. On July 16, two days before returning to Versailles, Zola issued a fresh manifesto, this time in the form of a letter to M. Brisson, the new Prime Minister, whom he upbraided for lending himself to Cavaignac's mock inquiry into the Dreyfus case and attaching importance to the alleged confession of the unhappy prisoner of Devil's Island. Since then we have learnt from M. Brisson himself[1] that he had to contend with many difficulties, the pressure exercised by President Faure, who was entirely on the side of the Militarists, the deceit and trickery of his colleague

---

[1] "Souvenirs," by Henri Brisson, published by "Le Siècle," 1903. Zola's letter is in "La Vérité en Marche."

Cavaignac, the diffidence of other ministers, and the mendacity of various officers. M. Brisson was sincerely desirous of doing his duty by furthering the revision of the Dreyfus case, and would have done it sooner than he did if so many obstacles had not been placed in his way. One part of the novelist's letter he certainly took to heart. Zola protested against being mobbed by hireling anti-Semites, and as he knew that a great expedition of those roughs to Versailles had been planned for the day of the new trial, he asked that proper measures might be taken for the preservation of order. This was done, gendarmes and troops, as well as police, being assembled.

The novelist returned, then, to Versailles with his counsel and his co-defendant, M. Perrenx, the publisher of "L'Aurore," who remained a kind of lay figure throughout the whole proceedings, being properly remunerated by his newspaper for the inconvenience he incurred. Zola and his advisers had now resolved to keep the Affair open as long as possible, this being the more advisable as Esterhazy, in consequence of the denunciations of a relative, had now been arrested with his mistress by order of an investigating magistrate; a similar fate also befalling Colonel Picquart, against whom M. Cavaignac had preferred a frivolous charge in consequence of his public declaration that two of the documents read by the minister to the Chamber on July 7 did not apply to Dreyfus at all and that a third was a forgery. Those incidents pointed to further developments, and moreover, already at this date, Zola and others had reason to suspect that the forgery in question might be the work of Colonel Henry,[1] whom they had come to regard with great

---

[1] So stated to Vizetelly by Zola a few days after his arrival in England.

Photo by V. R. Vizetelly

Émile Zola, Sept. 1898

suspicion, he being at the head of that Secret Intelligence Bureau whence so many strange documents emanated.

Thus on July 18, at Versailles, Maître Labori raised a fresh demurrer, claiming that as a court-martial was not a civil personality holding property it could not sue. This being disallowed, an application for leave to prove the whole of Zola's "J'Accuse" instead of merely the three indicted lines was submitted. Again came an adverse ruling, whereupon Zola, Perrenx, and their counsel quitted the court, allowing judgment to go by default.

There was some commotion, but as soon as the novelist and Maître Labori had entered their carriage, a squadron of cavalry swept down on the crowd, and this enabling the vehicle to escape, its occupants were driven to the residence of M. Charpentier, Zola's friend and former publisher, in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, Paris. There, Madame Zola and M. Clemenceau being present, a council of war was held. It was shown that Zola must not remain in France, for if the sentence by default were signified to him personally he would have to enter an appearance against it within a few days, and would not be entitled to make default a second time. In order to keep the Affair open he must avoid service for a while, which was only to be done by quitting France. He consented to that course, and London was chosen as his destination.[1] A few toilet articles were pressed upon him, and his wife emptied her purse into his; then, after dining, he drove to the Northern Railway Station, where he caught the express starting for Calais at nine P. M. He secured a compartment which had no other occupant, and journeyed to London without mishap, putting up at the Grosvenor Hotel, which M. Clemenceau had recommended to him.[1] The same day (July 19) he posted the following note to Ernest Vizetelly at Merton:

---

[1] M. Perrenx also had to leave France, and the writer believes that he went to Belgium.

"Tell nobody in the world, and particularly no newspaper, that I am in London. And oblige me by coming to see me to-morrow, Wednesday, at Grosvenor Hotel. You will ask for M. Pascal. And, above all, absolute silence, for the most serious interests are at stake."

Vizetelly kept the appointment, and found Zola with M. Desmoulin and M. Bernard Lazare, who had followed him to London. The last named returned to Paris immediately, but M. Desmoulin, who spoke a little English, remained with his friend for about a fortnight. The first question that arose was whether the English law would afford any facilities for the service of the sentence on Zola, and Vizetelly therefore fetched a legal friend, Mr. F. W. Wareham,[2] with whom a consultation was held at the Grosvenor Hotel. Mr. Wareham had already dealt indirectly with the Dreyfus case at a time when a mysterious adventurer had proposed to Vizetelly to fit out a ship at Bristol, and attempt (*à la* Captain Kettle) to rescue the prisoner from Devil's Island. Vizetelly had then had some reason to doubt the *bona fides* of the proposer of the scheme, who, it had seemed to him, might be an emissary of Dreyfus's enemies, anxious to inveigle Zola through his English representative into some illegal action which might ruin the cause. And indeed, after being subjected to a severe examination, the man vanished, as Hans Breitman would have said, into the *Ewigkeit.*

---

[1] The account of Zola's sojourn in England will here be brief, the writer having already given a full one in his book "With Zola in England, a Story of Exile," by E. A. Vizetelly, London, Chatto, and Leipsic, Tauchnitz, 1899. Further particulars will be found in various papers by the writer: "Some Recollections of Zola" ("Pall Mall Magazine," Vol XXIX, No. 117, January, 1903) and "Zola at Wimbledon" ("Wimbledon and Merton Annual," No. 1, 1904). A full account of the Christmas Zola spent in England (1898) was given in "M. A. P., Vol. IX, p. 235:" "Émile Zola in Exile," by Marie Suzanne (Mrs. E. A.) Vizetelly.

[2] Of Messrs. Gregson, Wareham, Waugh, and Gregson, solicitors.

At the consultation with Mr. Wareham it was found that, quite apart from the English laws, the French authorities claimed the right to serve process on their own subjects all the world over; and it therefore seemed best to remove Zola from London immediately, particularly as that very day he had been recognised by an English lady in the Buckingham Palace Road,[1] besides which some suspicion seemed to have been roused at the Grosvenor Hotel. Finally Mr. Wareham, whose services at this time were of great value, offered his own house, 1 Prince's Road, Wimbledon, as a provisional retreat. Zola's stay there was brief, however, for Wimbledon soon seemed to be too populous a place and too near both to London and to Merton, where Vizetelly resided, for it was virtually a certainty that the latter would soon be besieged by journalists eager to know what had become of Zola. His disappearance from France had created an extraordinary sensation. His presence was reported now in Switzerland, now in Norway, now in Holland, now in Belgium, now in other parts of the world, but at last some English newspapers found the right track, which they were good enough to follow no farther than the Oatlands Park Hotel, near Weybridge, whither Zola and his friend Desmoulin were removed on quitting Wimbledon.

---

[1] It fortunately turned out that the lady was the wife of Mr. Percy Spalding of Messrs. Chatto and Windus, Zola's English publishers, and thus the matter went no further.

Through the agency of Mr. Wareham, a furnished country-house was next secured for the novelist, this being Penn, Oatlands Chase, the residence of Mr. E. G. Venables, and it was there that Zola settled down to write his novel "Fécondité," the first volume of his new series, "Les Quatre Évangiles," which he had been quietly planning amid all the turmoil of the Dreyfus Affair, — a positive proof of the superiority of his mind, for not one man in a hundred would have had the courage, the coolness, or the power to take up a great literary task and isolate himself in study at every available moment in such extraordinary circumstances as those in which Zola had found himself, — insulted, befouled, and condemned. He had now also been suspended from the Legion of Honour, he had sacrificed large sums of money, and his prospects were by no means bright. He could only hope that time might elicit the truth and bring about a revulsion of feeling in his favour. Meanwhile, he turned to his usual panacea, work, diverted his mind as far as possible from the great campaign, which he knew would be conducted ably by all his fellow-fighters in Paris, and began to pen his book on the causes of the depopulation of France.

M. Desmoulin went to Paris to fetch the materials for "Fécondité"; servants were engaged and other arrangements made by Mrs. Vizetelly; and her daughter, Violette, — a Parisienne by birth, whose first words had been lisped in French, — went to live with Zola to act as his interpreter, and so far as her youthfulness permitted, take charge of housekeeping matters. A bicycle was provided for

Zola, and when he was not writing or reading he and his young ward pedalled through the country around Walton and Weybridge. On those occasions Zola made frequent use of a camera which M. Desmoulin had brought from France, and the writer holds a large collection of photographs taken by him, — little views of villages, commons, farms, churches, reaches of the Thames, glimpses of the Wye, Windsor Castle, the Crystal Palace, and so forth.

Eventually, to give him some solace amid his loneliness, it was arranged that the little boy and girl to whom reference has been made in a previous chapter should be brought to England and stay with him for a short time. Madame Zola also managed to travel backward and forward on various occasions. When the tenancy at Penn expired, another house called "Summerfield," with large secluded grounds, on Spinney Hill at Addlestone, was secured for Zola. Here, still writing "Fécondité," he remained until late in the autumn of 1898. M. Charpentier was for a few days a visitor; an excursion was made to Windsor and a few other places; but the novelist's life would have been not only very retired but also quite peaceful if it had not been for the acute emotion into which he was thrown, the shocks he experienced every now and then, as the result of some important news from Paris. The friends who wished to communicate with him had to forward their letters to Mr. Wareham, Zola's actual address being known only to the latter, the Vizetellys, M. Charpentier, and a Wimbledon gentleman, Mr. A. W. Pamplin, whose services had been required. The "master," as one often called him, assumed at that time a variety of names which were suggested by Vizetelly, — the latter objecting to "Pascal," the first Zola had taken, for it might have proved a guide to any French process-server acquainted with "Le Docteur Pascal," the novelist's well-known book. Vizetelly therefore proposed some names which would not attract much attention and might pass as being either English or French. At Oatlands Park and Penn, therefore, Zola was known as Beauchamp; at Summerfield as Roger (akin to Rogers); and at the Queen's Hotel, Norwood, whither he ultimately removed, as Richard, which suggested Richards. Vizetelly was in constant communication with him and frequently at Penn and Summerfield. At other times hardly a day passed without an exchange of notes, mostly, however, on trivial little matters connected with Zola's requirements, — his bicycle, his photographs, the books he wanted, a supply of manuscript paper, some passing trouble with a servant, the difficulty of getting fish, or the replies to be given to journalists or others. Here is a rather more interesting note which Zola wrote on July 29, when he was moving from the Oatlands Park Hotel, where he had attracted some little attention:

> I am worried that I cannot occupy Penn until Monday, for I feel that my stay here without Madame Beauchamp,[1] whose arrival I announced, is beginning to seem strange. However it is necessary to accept the situation. To throw people off the scent this is what we must do. Let me be fetched on Monday between two and three in the afternoon with one of the conveyances at the station [Walton-on-Thames], not one belonging to the hotel. The vehicle can wait while I pay my bill, and afterwards we can all drive to the station as if I were going to Lon-

---

[1] Madame Zola had been expected, but, being watched, had been unable as yet to leave Paris.

don. At the station you will have left the trunk which will then certainly have arrived from Paris at Wareham's house or yours. On reaching the station from the hotel, one can claim the valise, wait awhile, then take another conveyance and drive to the house [Penn]. For my part I will not get into that second conveyance, I will go to the house on foot. I think that will be the wisest course.

On the other hand, we shall have to tell a little tale here. For instance, you might say that as Madame Beauchamp is detained in France beside a sick relative for a longer time than I anticipated and I feel very much bored alone [M. Desmoulin had gone to France], I am going back to London to stay with some friends till she arrives. And you might add that if we wish to come back and spend a month here, we will warn them by letter, inquiring if they have a suitable room. When you come you might bring me forty postage stamps for France and ten for London. Again thanks for your devotion, and very cordially yours.

EM. BEAUCHAMP.

If you read any serious news from France in the newspapers, let me know at once — Desmoulin has arrived at this very moment with the trunk. I shall be better able to wait now that my friend is here.

Among other notes of about the same date are the following:

My dear *Confrère* — What French books have you? Can you lend me La Bruyère's "Caractères" and Stendhal's "Chartreuse de Parme" — not his "Rouge et Noir"?

I have received the books, and thank you *infiniment*, for they helped me to spend a good day yesterday. I shall expect you to-morrow at six o'clock, and we will take a decision about the house. My homage to Madame Vizetelly. Affectionately yours.[1]

---

[1] This note was signed "Émile Zola," but thinking that imprudent, he carried his pen violently over the signature, producing an extraordinary com-

My dear *Confrère,* — Please let me have six boxes of photographic plates similar to the others. Can you lend me "Les Chouans," "César Birotteau," "La Recherche de l'Absolu," "Les Illusions perdues," by Balzac. If not, please buy them — the edition at 1 fr. 25 c.

In addition to books, Zola was of course kept well supplied with newspapers, both French and English. Vizetelly procured him an English grammar for French students and other works, and with this help he picked up sufficient knowledge of the English language to understand the news telegraphed from Paris about the Dreyfus case. In all such news he naturally took the keenest interest. On August 31 Vizetelly received from Paris a telegram to be transmitted to him, — a telegram to this effect: "Be prepared for a great success." It greatly puzzled Zola when it reached him, for there was nothing in the newspapers he had seen to which it could refer. However, a score of possibilities in connection with the Dreyfus case immediately occurred to him, and he spoke of them in presence of Vizetelly's daughter, passing from one surmise to another and becoming quite feverish as his impatience to know the meaning of the mysterious "wire" increased. His young companion was undoubtedly upset by his strange excitement, which gained on her also, in such wise that she passed a very restless night, beset repeatedly by a dream in which she fancied herself in some strange, big, dark place where a

bination of blots and scratches. Sometimes he signed "Em. Beauchamp," at others "J. Beauchamp," and "B." Later, he ventured on a "Z." Very few of his notes of that time bear his name in full. Moreover, for fear of the Cabinet Noir (the *petit bleu* affair showed that one existed), his letters to Paris were usually addressed by Vizetelly to a person who transmitted them to those for whom they were intended.

man lay on the ground surrounded by people who raised numerous exclamations in the French language. In the midst of it all, moreover, she saw Zola waving his arms and looking well satisfied. He, on the following morning, having heard her calling in her sleep, spoke to her of it with some concern, and she then told him of her dream, of which at first he could make neither head nor tail. But shortly afterwards, when the newspapers arrived, he found in them an account of the arrest and confession of Colonel Henry, the forger, followed by a brief telegram: "Paris, Midnight. Colonel Henry has been found dead in his cell at Mont Valérien."

The telegram which Vizetelly had transmitted to him was then explained: it had certainly referred to Henry's arrest and confession. As for the announcement of the colonel's death following the story of Violette Vizetelly's curious dream, one can only say that this may have been merely a coincidence, though Zola and others were certainly impressed by it. When the writer related the incident in a previous work,[1] in a more detailed manner than he has done here, some critics declared that he taxed their credulity, particularly as he was unwilling to allow the case to be tested. But he must adhere to what he stated then. If he deprecated investigation it was solely because, as a parent, he did not wish to perturb or to encourage any morbidity of mind in a curiously impressionable girl of sixteen, on whose account, and in much the same connection, he had previously experienced some anxiety, which later years have happily dispelled.

After Henry's death Zola was in hopes of soon returning to France, but his friends urged him to remain where he was, for his name was still like a torch which might rekindle the conflagration. Moreover, as the revision of the Dreyfus case was delayed for some weeks longer, Zola again began to feel anxious. Important incidents were certainly occurring in France. Scarcely had General Zurlinden replaced M. Cavaignac as War Minister when Esterhazy took to flight, anticipating, no doubt, the important communications respecting certain forgeries in the Dreyfus case which Colonel Picquart made to the Minister of Justice a few days later. At last, on Sunday, September 15, some indication of what was about to occur in Paris appeared in a few of the London papers which Vizetelly sent to Zola, who replied:

---

[1] "With Zola in England," p. 135 *et seq*

> "Thank you for sending the papers by René.[1] Details are wanting evidently; but, to my mind, the report is decisive, revision is certain. It is now only necessary to have patience,—patience which will perhaps have to be of some duration. . . . I am rather poorly to-day, it is one of those nervous crises which torture me whenever I work too much or when I have undergone too great a shock."

Two days later General Zurlinden, who had stubbornly opposed revision at the Council of Ministers, resigned the office of War Minister (in which he was succeeded by General Chanoine) and resumed the duties of Military Governor of Paris; in which capacity, to revenge himself for the recent disclosures of Colonel Picquart, he cast the latter into a military prison. Then, on September 23, a process-server appeared at Zola's house to levy execution in virtue of the judgment obtained by the handwriting experts.[1] All those incidents — and also the Fashoda trouble, which if it had ended badly would have compelled Zola to leave England — affected the novelist's health, but he fretted more particularly on account of the ailing state of a pet dog, — a toy Pomeranian named the Chevalier de Perlinpinpin, but familiarly called Pinpin only — which he had been obliged to leave in Paris, foreign dogs not being admitted into England. Madame Zola was then in Paris in charge of the little animal and did everything possible for it, but it pined for its master, whose constant companion it had been, on whose writing-table and in whose wastepaper basket it had been for years accustomed to lie.

---

[1] Victor René Vizetelly, the writer's son.

Zola was passionately attached to his dogs and other animals, as his writings testify;[2] and when he learnt the truth about Pinpin, which was kept from him for a time, he grieved exceedingly and became quite ill, experiencing an attack of the angina from which he suffered periodically. As he would not see a doctor some medicine he was accustomed to take in such cases was obtained from France. But more than once Vizetelly became alarmed respecting him, for the stifling fits left him quite exhausted. "I shall die like this some day," he said more than once, "but it is useless to get a doctor. There is nothing to be done beyond what I do."

Thus, still and ever, he fretted about his dog, particularly if a day or two passed without the receipt of a letter or a telegram respecting its condition. On or about September 26 Vizetelly went to him with the important news that M. Brisson had at last referred the revision of the Dreyfus case to the Cour de Cassation. Such tidings seemed likely to cheer him; but directly he caught sight of Vizetelly he exclaimed, "A telegram! About Pinpin?" And when Vizetelly answered no, his face fell, and scarcely listening to the good news he sank back on the sofa, muttering, "Ah! if it had only been about my poor dog!" A few days later he learnt that Pinpin was dead. Then for a moment he remained grieving piteously. But all at once, shaking his fist, he shouted, "The scoundrels! it was they who killed him!" — referring of course to the anti-Dreyfusites.

---

[1] Zola had appealed against the first judgment, but on August 10 the Appeal Court confirmed the conviction, altering the original penalty (see *ante*, p. 463) to one of a month's imprisonment, a thousand francs' fine, and ten thousand francs' damages for each of the three plaintiffs.

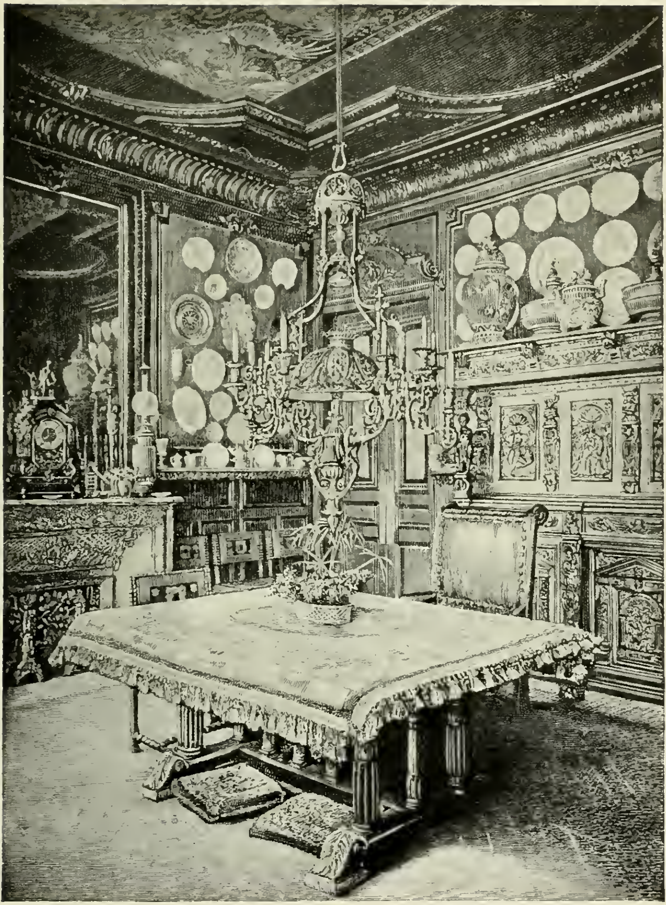
[2] See notably his articles "Pour les Bêtes" and "Enfin Couronné" in "Nouvelle Campagne."

But it was only suspense that unnerved Zola either with regard to the episodes of the Affair or in connection with his dog. Confronted by the inevitable in the case of Pinpin, he braced himself and began to mend. Soon afterwards (October 10), an execution having been duly levied at his house in the Rue de Bruxelles, a sale took place there. In the throng which then assembled were many admirers who hoped to be able to purchase souvenirs. But Zola had previously arranged that whatever might be the article first offered for sale, M. Fasquelle, his publisher, should bid the full amount of the execution. This was done; the auctioneer put up a Louis XIII table and M. Fasquelle bid thirty-two thousand francs[1] for it, at which price it became nominally his property. The sale was then finished, and the would-be buyers of souvenirs retired disappointed.

Late in October, when the Cour de Cassation, accepting the question of revision in principle, began its famous in-

---

[1] £1,280 = $6,400.



Zola's Dining-Room

quiry, and when M. Brisson fell from office to be succeeded by M. Dupuy, Zola was removed from Addlestone[1] to the Queen's Hotel, Upper Norwood, where he remained till the end of his stay in England. He was still writing "Fécondité," to which he devoted all his mornings; and occupying a small suite of rooms in one of the pavilions of the hotel, taking his meals in private and holding no intercourse with his neighbours, his loneliness increased, though Norwood around him was teeming with life. At intervals, however, he now received a few visits from friends. The first who came was M. Yves Guyot, who had championed the cause of Dreyfus in "Le Siècle," which he directed, from the outset. With him was an English friend, Mr. J. H. Levy, of the Personal Rights' Association. Later came M. Jaurès, the famous French Socialist leader, another champion of the good cause; later still, Zola's old friend, M. Théodore Duret, the historian of the early years of the Third Republic. M. Fasquelle and M. Octave Mirbeau also saw the novelist at this time; and about Easter, 1899, Maître Labori paid a flying visit to England to consult him. There was one American visitor, Mr. Brett of the New York Macmillan Company, and a few English ones: Mr. George Moore, Mr. Lucien Wolf, Mr. Chatto and his partner, Mr. Percy Spalding. But those visits, besides being brief, were spread over a period of seven or eight months. Madame Zola certainly joined her husband for some part of the time, but the travelling, and more particularly the English climate, tried her health exceedingly, and for some weeks she was laid up.

---

[1] Before leaving Addlestone he wrote for the London "Star" a short story called "Angeline," based on a tale of a haunted house current at Walton-on-Thames. The French text appeared in "La Grande Revue," edited by M. Labori. in 1899.

For the rest, the Vizetellys and the Warehams were frequently at Norwood, and there was still no little correspondence between the novelist and his translator. Here are a couple of notes written by Zola early in 1899:

January 3, '99.

My dear *Confrère* and Friend, — I have just telegraphed to you that the whole story about an English journalist having interviewed me is purely and simply a lie. I have seen nobody. Besides, there can be no question of extraditing me: they could only serve me with the judgment of the Assize Court. Those people don't even know what they write about. As for ——'s indiscretion, this is much to be regretted. I am writing to him. For the sake of our communications I have always desired that Wareham's name and address should be known only to those on whom one can depend. Tell Wareham to remain on his guard and *never* acknowledge that he knows my address.[1] Persevere in that course yourself. That will suffice for the moment. I will wait a few days to see if anything occurs, before deciding whether the correspondence arrangements should be altered. It would be a big affair; and I should afterwards regret a change if it were to prove uncalled for. So I repeat, let us wait.

Thursday, February 16, '99.

My dear *Confrère*, — You did right to refuse Mr. —— my address. *I absolutely decline to see anybody.* Whoever may call on you, under whatever pretext, show him the door and preserve the silence of the tomb. Less than ever am I in a humour to let people disturb me! As for Mr. Chatto and his partner, as you and they know, I shall be delighted to see them; but as you are also aware, my wife is at this moment very poorly indeed, and I am in a very low state myself. We should be sorry hosts, so kindly ask our friends to postpone the visit till a little later. Our *amitiés* to you and yours. Z.

---

[1] In explanation of the above, it may be mentioned that Mr. Wareham's position as Zola's intermediary had come to the knowledge of a journalist through the indiscretion of a friend in Paris.

On the day the second of the above letters was written, President Félix Faure died suddenly and under what seemed to be suspicious circumstances. It is probable that his seizure was caused by the shock he had experienced a few hours previously when certain revelations made to him by a foreign visitor of princely rank had dispelled his confidence in some of the prominent military men whom he had so long trusted and supported. The news naturally filled Zola with anxiety, for the future course of events might largely depend on the character of M. Faure's successor. Fortunately the choice of the French Congress fell on M. Émile Loubet, then President of the Senate. Other important incidents — M. Déroulède's attempt at a *coup d'état,* the transference of the revision of the Dreyfus case from the Criminal Chamber of the Cour de Cassation to the entire body — kept Zola in a nervous state throughout February and March. His birthday fell on April 2, and Vizetelly, finding it impossible to be with him on that occasion, wrote him a note to which he replied as follows:

My dear *Confrère* and Friend, — Thanks for your good wishes on the occasion of the anniversary of my birth. I feel deeply touched by them in the state of sorrowful emotion in which I am. You write me some very good and true things which go straight to my heart. And I thank you to-day for the devotion and the discreet attention which you have never ceased to show me since the day when I set foot on this land of exile. I shall expect you the day you please to select, and with kind remembrances to your family, I cordially press your hand.

ÉMILE ZOLA.

As the time for the decision of the Cour de Cassation drew near, the novelist became more and more restless. He finished "Fécondité" in May, and on the twenty-seventh of that month decided that whatever might be the judgment of the court, he would return to France directly it was given. Everything pointed to a favourable issue, and in that anticipation he drafted a declaration which he proposed to issue in "L'Aurore" on his arrival in Paris. On the evening of June 3 he received a telegram worded, "Cheque postponed," which, in accordance with previous arrangements, signified that revision had been granted and that Dreyfus would have to appear before a new court-martial. Had the words been "Cheque unpaid," they would have meant "Revision refused," while "Cheque paid" would have signified not only that revision was accorded but that Dreyfus would not even be tried afresh. For a long time previously Zola had been receiving similar telegrams which, in accordance with a plan devised by him, were full of hidden meaning.

M. Fasquelle and his wife were then in London, and it was speedily arranged that Zola, who was now in high spirits, should return to France with them on the following night, Sunday, June 4. This he did, quitting England without regret since he was going home; though he repeatedly acknowledged that everything possible had been done for his comfort, and that he had seen a great deal that interested him keenly. He appreciated the wonderful change which seemed to have come over the English press with respect to himself, and he was grateful also to the various persons who had recognised him and preserved discretion.[1]

---

[1] On June 7 he wrote to Vizetelly: "Excuse me for not having written to you at once. I have been caught and carried off in such a whirl that I

About the hour when he reached Paris on the morning of June 5, "L'Aurore" appeared with his declaration "Justice!" a translation of which was issued the same day in "The Westminster Gazette."[1] After recalling under what circumstances he had been obliged to leave France, mentioning how he had been threatened and insulted and how cruelly he had suffered both before and during his exile, Zola reviewed the many developments of the Dreyfus case. And he continued:

> "Now, as truth has been made manifest and justice has been granted, I return. I desire to do so as quietly as possible, in the serenity of victory, without giving any occasion for public disturbances. Those treat me unworthily who would confound me with the base folk who batten on public demonstrations. Even as I remained quiet abroad, so shall I resume my seat at the national hearth like a peaceful citizen who wishes to disturb none, but only desires to resume his usual work without giving people any occasion to occupy themselves further about him."

He disclaimed, he said, all reward or applause, for no merit attached to what he had done. The cause was so beautiful, so human. Truth had conquered, and it could not have been otherwise. Then he added:

> "Moreover, my reward I have it already; it is that of thinking of the innocent man whom I have helped to extricate from the living tomb in which he had been plunged in agony for four long years. Ah! I confess that the idea of his return, the thought of seeing him free and of pressing his hands in mine, overwhelms me with extraordinary emotion, fills my eyes with happy tears! That

---

have not yet had a moment to myself. I made on the whole a very satisfactory journey, not a soul recognised me, and here everything is for the best."

[1] The numerous articles on the Dreyfus case which the writer contributed to that journal were largely inspired by Zola.

moment will suffice to repay me for all my worries. My friends and I will have done a good deed for which every good heart in France will remember us gratefully. And what more could one desire? — a family that will love us, a wife and children who will bless us, a man who will owe it to us that in him has become embodied the triumph of equity and human solidarity."

Afterwards, referring to "J'Accuse," he said:

"Do people remember the abominable clamour which greeted my Letter to the President of the Republic? I was the insulter of the Army, a man who had sold himself, a man without fatherland! Literary friends, in their consternation and fright, drew away from me, abandoned me to the horror of my crime. Articles were indeed written which will weigh heavily on the consciences of those who signed them. Never, it was urged, had the most brutal of writers, a madman full of sickly pride, dared to address a more insulting and more mendacious letter to the Chief of the State! And now just reperuse my poor letter. I have become a trifle ashamed of it — ashamed of its discretion, its opportunism, I will almost say its cowardice. . . . I had greatly softened things in it; I had even passed some by in silence, — some which are manifest to-day and acknowledged, but of which I then still wished to doubt. To tell the truth, yes, I already suspected Henry, but I had no proofs. So I thought it best to leave him out of the case. And I divined other matters, for confidential information had come to me unsolicited, — information so terrible that, fearing its frightful consequences, I did not think that I ought to make it public. Yet now those *confidences* have been revealed, have become commonplace truisms. And my poor letter is no longer up to date; it seems quite childish, a mere skit, the paltry invention of some timid novelist, by the side of the truth, so superb and fierce. . . There was not an unnecessary word in it, there was nothing but the grief of a citizen respectfully soliciting justice of the Chief of his country. But such has been the everlasting history of my writings — I have never been able to pen a book, a page even, without being covered with falsehood and insult, though on the morrow my assailants have been constrained to admit that I was in the right."

After indicating that he personally harboured no anger or rancour against anybody, Zola pointed out that, in the public interest, some example ought to be made of the wrongdoers, for otherwise the masses would never believe in the immensity of the crime. "But," said he, "I leave to Nemesis the task of completing her work. I shall not aid her." Then came an impassioned appeal on behalf of the noble and persecuted Colonel Picquart, for the good work would only be complete when justice had been done him. And Zola continued:

> "All former political parties have now collapsed, and there remain but two camps, — that of the reactionary forces of the past, and that of the men bent on inquiry, truth, and uprightness, who are marching towards the future. That order of battle alone is logical; it must be retained in order that to-morrow may be ours. To work, then! By pen, by speech, and by action! To work for progress and deliverance! 'T will be the completion of the task of 1789, a pacific revolution in mind and in heart, the democracy welded together, freed from evil passions, based at last on the just law of labour which will permit an equitable apportionment of wealth. Thenceforward France a free country, France a dispenser of justice, the harbinger of the equitable society of the coming century, will once more find herself a sovereign among the nations. And there exists no empire, however cased in mail it be, but will crumble when France shall have given justice to the world even as she has already given it liberty. I believe in no other historical *rôle* for her henceforward; never yet will she have known such a splendour of glory."

The conclusion followed:

"I am at home. The Public Prosecutor may therefore signify to me, whenever he pleases, the sentence of the Versailles Assizes condemning me by default to a year's imprisonment and three thousand francs fine. And we shall once more find ourselves before a jury. In provoking a prosecution I only desired truth and justice. To-day they are here. My case can now serve no useful purpose; it no longer even interests me. Justice simply has to say whether it be a crime to desire truth." [1]

Unfortunately subsequent events confirmed only some of Zola's generous anticipations. M. Dupuy fell from power on June 12, M. Waldeck-Rousseau succeeded him on the 22d, Dreyfus landed in France on July 1, and the new court-martial on him assembled at Rennes on August 8. His partisans were at first full of hope, but various incidents supervening (among others, a dastardly attempt to assassinate Maître Labori), no little anxiety returned. Zola had remained in seclusion at Médan,[2] glancing at the final proofs of "Fécondité," which was appearing serially in "L'Aurore," and thinking of his next work, "Travail." Meantime Vizetelly was repeatedly solicited by English editors to induce him to write something about the court-martial, but he was unwilling to do so for any foreign newspapers, and besides, as he put it, it was neither right nor possible to say anything until the verdict was given. He communicated with Vizetelly several times on these matters, on one occasion sending a card on which, in spite of all the bad rumours, he indicated his confidence in the result of the proceedings: "My dear friend," he said, "I will say nothing, and I beg you to say nothing in my name. One must wait firmly for victory."[1]

---

[1] The full text will be found in "La Vérité en Marche."

[2] He had written to Vizetelly, under date July 20, 1899: "I am at last sending you the promised photographs, and apologise for the delay. You can have no idea of the worries that have assailed me. I have often regretted the quietude of Queen's Hotel already. However, everything is going for the best, the happy *dénouement* is approaching, and I start for Médan on Tuesday to take a rest. I have read in 'Le Matin' your articles on my stay in England. They are *très bien,* they have skilfully remained within the limits which I asked you not to exceed. . . . Thanks again. I press your hand affectionately. Émile Zola." The articles referred to were those reprinted as "Zola in England."

On September 9, however, the unfortunate Dreyfus was once more found guilty of the crime he had never committed. Zola, still at Médan, was profoundly shocked and horrified by the verdict, and again he published a declaration, "Le Cinquième Acte,"[2] in which he expressed his fear that the truth might fall on France from Germany in a manner which might have the most terrible consequences. The result of the trial certainly caused amazement all the world over. In Great Britain the indignation was extreme, and a proposal to boycott the Exhibition which was to be held in Paris in 1900 was agitated by several newspapers. Vizetelly was appealed to by some who felt that Zola might be able to quiet the outcry, and an offer of two shillings a word for an article which might run to ten thousand words, was made to him by the editor of a London newspaper. But even this proposal was declined by Zola, who wrote to Vizetelly on September 14:

My dear *Confrère* and Friend,—I do not take payment in France for my articles on the Dreyfus case, and still less would I accept money from a foreign newspaper. As for intervening between France and the world, I will not and cannot do so, for all sorts of reasons. Besides, in spite of the gravity of the symptoms, I do not believe that our Exhibition is seriously threatened. I still wish to believe that France will do what may be necessary to be in a position of dignity next May when she will receive her guests. All this between ourselves, this letter is absolutely for you alone. You would cause me the greatest grief by the slightest indiscretion. . . . Thanks for the English newspapers you have sent. I have just read them with keen interest. But all that does not frighten me much."[1]

---

[1] A *fac-simile* of the card in question accompanies the present volume.

[2] See "La Vérité en Marche," p. 147 *et seq.*

Five days later the unhappy Dreyfus accepted the pardon offered him by President Loubet, and Zola then addressed a beautiful, pathetic letter to the poor martyr's wife, in which he gave her the assurance that his friends and himself would continue the battle until both her husband and France should be fully rehabilitated.[2]

In October "Fécondité" was published as a volume, and dealing as it did with a problem of national importance, the decline in the birth-rate and the massacre of infantile life in France, it attracted widespread attention. It was a very outspoken book, but a necessary one, and its exposure of the vices of married life was one to be applied to other countries besides France. But Vizetelly, who remembered the past and knew that Pecksniffs and Podsnaps still flourished in England, felt that the national cant would not suffer a plain statement of the truth. Some difficulty occurred therefore with respect to the translation of "Fécondité," the English version of which had to be considerably curtailed. In France the sale of the original work was assisted by the fact that after all the abominations of the Affair a certain number of Zola's former admirers were now gradually returning to him.[3]

---

[1] A *fac-simile* of the above letter is given with the present volume.

[2] "La Vérité en Marche," p. 163 *et seq.*

[3] "Fécondité." Paris, Fasquelle, 1899, 18mo, 751 pages. Some copies on special papers; a few in two vols. 8vo. Ninety-fourth thousand in 1901.

His remaining share in the Dreyfus case may be dealt with briefly. The victim was at last free, restored to his wife and children; and thus a great part of Zola's object had been achieved. The charge against the novelist of having libelled the Esterhazy court-martial still had to be considered, but his trial was repeatedly postponed in consequence of the government bringing an Amnesty Bill before the legislature. Zola repeatedly protested against the measure, addressing long letters to both the Senate and President Loubet on the subject.[1] He did not wish to be amnestied but judged, and he thought it abominable that the same law should be applied to him and other defenders of the truth as to all the evil-doers who had persecuted Dreyfus, screened the scoundrel Esterhazy, and made use of every possible lie, forgery, and fraud, in order to obscure the truth, deceive the nation, and prevent justice from being done. But Zola's protests, whether by letter or by word of mouth, before the Senatorial Committee, which received him on March 14, 1900, were of no more avail than those of Dreyfus himself, M. Joseph Reinach, and Colonel Picquart. In point of fact M. Waldeck-Rousseau, the Prime Minister, was most concerned about the Clericalist peril behind the Affair, — the strenuous efforts which bishops, priests, and particularly religious orders had been making to capture France. They had used the Dreyfus case as a weapon; under their secret direction it had proved indeed a powerful one, and in M. Waldeck-Rousseau's opinion, before all else, it was necessary to deprive them of it. For that purpose he devised the Amnesty in the hope that he would thereby kill the Affair, put it out of the way, before dealing with the religious orders. The right course would have been to proceed against the compromised members of the General Staff, but after the Rennes verdict M. Waldeck-Rousseau had not the courage to do so. Besides, in that matter he was largely in the hands of his own War Minister, General de Galliffet. France was committed to the Amnesty long before General André arose to enforce obedience in the higher ranks of the army. And thus for political reasons a crowning iniquity was perpetrated. Impunity was assured to the Merciers, the Boisdeffres, the Billots, and all the others. At the most they lost their military positions. Every criminal action in the Affair was stopped and prohibited by the Amnesty Bill, which became law in November, 1900. The privileges of parties in civil actions were alone reserved, though at the same time Captain Dreyfus retained the right to apply for further revision and even rehabilitation whenever he might discover the necessary new facts. At that moment it was scarcely imagined in high places that he would do so. M. Waldeck-Rousseau, like many another before him, fancied that he had indeed killed the Affair; but at the time of writing these lines it is once more before the Cour de Cassation.

---

[1] See his letters in "La Vérité en Marche," p. 181 and p. 205; also others in "L'Aurore," March 10 and 15, 1900.

It should be added that, prior to the Amnesty, Zola had been acquitted of the charge of traducing Judet of "Le Petit Journal," who had so foully attacked his father's memory; and had moreover secured a judgment condemning the unprincipled journalist to pay him five thousand francs' damages. Judet, however, carried the case to the Appeal Court, and it long remained in abeyance. Finally,

Photo by Émile Zola

Mme. Zola at the Queen's Hotel, Upper Norwood
January, 1899

in a letter addressed to Maître Labori on March 7, 1901, Zola renounced all further action in this case as well as in one instituted against the handwriting experts for the purpose of setting aside the judgment by which they had levied an execution on the novelist's furniture. "Let them keep the money, let them go off with their pockets full," wrote Zola; "the bitter irony of it all will be the greater, and there will be yet a little more baseness in the Affair." For his part he did not wish that the great battle in a high and noble cause should end in sordid squabbles about sums of money. Though it was said that the Amnesty effaced everything, the Public Prosecution Office had retained the fines and costs levied upon him, and this, again, he regarded as monstrous; but he repeated that he did not wish to drag the cause through petty proceedings based on personal interest. The truth would not come from them, though assuredly it would come eventually.

That Zola spent a large amount of money in connection with the Dreyfus case is certain; for besides the costs of all the legal proceedings (criminal and civil) against him, which remained heavy notwithstanding the disinterestedness of Maître Labori, he often contributed considerable sums for objects connected with the cause. Moreover, although both "Paris" and "Fécondité" sold fairly well, thanks to the foreign demand, a very great drop occurred in the circulation of the novelist's earlier works, for which there had been a steady sale in previous years. It may be estimated that in 1897 Zola's income was between seven and eight thousand pounds. In 1898, the year of "J'Accuse," it was not more than a third of that figure. He sold the serial rights of "Fécondité" to "L'Aurore" for about half the amount he had been receiving for his works from other journals previous to the Affair; and it was not published as a volume till late in 1899, in which year also his income remained a low one. Indeed, it never rose again to its former figure. His book "Travail," of which something will be said in our next chapter, was only a *demi-succès* from the pecuniary standpoint. And as all this was, in the main, the result of his participation in the Dreyfus case, it will be seen that he made no small sacrifices for the cause he championed.

He found a sufficient reward, he said, in a quieter conscience, in the knowledge that he had done his duty as a man. Sympathy came to him, as one has mentioned, from many a foreign land, and of course he was not without sympathisers in France, his fellow-fighters of that *bataillon sacré* which by degrees became a small army. Subsequent to his condemnation in Paris in 1898, the newly founded Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, which was destined to recruit many soldiers for the good cause, opened, in conjunction with the newspapers which supported it, a subscription for a medal to be offered to Zola in recognition of his courage. In a few days over ten thousand francs were collected, and a superb gold medal, bearing the effigy of the novelist designed by M. Alexandre Charpentier, and by its size, weight, and the quality of the metal unique in numismatics, was struck.[1] Zola however, was long unwilling to accept it, for victory was not yet won. At last, some time after Dreyfus was pardoned, he consented to do so; and the presentation took place at the offices of "Le Siècle," whose editor, M. Yves Guyot, was president of the subscription committee. Besides the Dreyfus family, Colonel Picquart, and the Laboris, many others who had fought the good fight were present; and in response to M. Guyot's address, Zola pronounced a short and feeling speech, towards the close of which he said: "Undoubtedly, if the question had only been one of saving an innocent man from his torturers, of restoring Dreyfus to his wife and children, our victory would be complete. The whole world holds him to be a martyr, his legal rehabilitation will soon follow — all that frightful story is surely ended! But there was another dear to us, one who was poisoned, in peril of death, and that dear and great and noble one was France. . . . We dreamt of seeing her freed from ancient servitude, rising, with her artisans, her savants, her thinkers, to a new ideal, reconquering old Europe, not indeed by arms but by the ideas that liberate. Never had there occurred such an opportunity to give her a sound practical lesson, for we had set our hands upon the very rottenness that was eating into the cracking, decaying edifice; and we thought if we pointed it out that would be sufficient, that the house would be cleansed, rebuilt, properly and substantially. But in that respect we have been beaten. They have decided merely to pass a sponge over the rottenness, so that the timbers will continue to crack and decay till the house at last comes down. For that rea-

---

[1] It was, so to say, a medallion, its diameter being about 7 inches (183 *millimètres*), and its thickness about one eighth of an inch (3 *millimètres*). It weighed 5.80 pounds troy. On the obverse was the novelist's effigy with the inscription, *Hommage à Émile Zola;* on the reverse, the inscription, *La Vérité est en Marche et Rien ne l'arrêtera, Émile Zola, 13 Janvier,* 1898. A copy of the medal on a reduced scale (59 *millimètres*) was also given to Zola, and with the balance of the subscription money small copies in silver and

---

bronze were distributed among the subscribers, others being sold to the public.

son I am sad, for that reason I cannot sing victory. Dreyfus is free, but our France remains ill, feeling that she has not strength enough to bear the splendour of truth and justice. And yet I am hopeful, for I believe in her labour, in the power of her genius. A somewhat long period would have elapsed, perhaps, had I decided to await her complete recovery before accepting the medal which has been laid aside for so many months in the expectation of a beautiful dawn. So I accept it now with emotion and with gratitude. And I hope that I shall not die before I see, reflected in its pure gold, that rising dawn of supreme national glory which we have all desired."

XIV

LAST YEARS — DEATH

1901 — 1902

Zola's attempts at constructive writing — His evolution toward Socialism — Some further remarks on "Fécondité" — "Travail" and the pacific evolution of the working classes — Zola and the tastes of his readers — Publication of "Travail" — "L'Ouragan" — Zola's difficulties with "Vérité" — He is haunted by the Dreyfus case — He adapts it to "Vérité" — His evolution in religious matters — His Positivism — His opinion of the French Protestants — His last days — Announcement of his death — Account and cause of it — The autopsy — Madame Zola's illness — Reception of the news in France and abroad — Insults and tributes of sympathy — Preparations for the funeral — The question of military honours — Difficulties with Captain Dreyfus — The obsequies — A great demonstration — The speeches at the graveside — M. Anatole France's stirring oration.

UNTIL Zola began his last series, "Les Quatre Évangiles," he had been, virtually all his life, a writer of the so-called destructive school, that is to say he had directed attention to an infinity of things which in his opinion ought to be swept away, but he had said little indeed of what he would set in their place. In like manner, within narrower limits, Charles Dickens and Charles Reade had exposed abuses without indicating remedies. Zola for his part long held that remedial measures were not of his province. It was for the legislator to devise them, and there was no call for the author to go beyond an *exposé* of the abuses which required redress. Time and circumstances gradually modified that view, and in his last years, while persevering in his destructive work, Zola made some attempt to couple re-construction with it. A suggestion of what was coming appeared already in the pages of his novel, "Paris," which concluded the trilogy of "Les Trois Villes." In that series he had shown Faith expiring, Hope a delusion, Charity a mockery; but at the same time he had felt that if those guiding principles were to be discarded, they must be replaced by others, — Fruitfulness, Work, Truth, and Justice.

The scheme was of earlier date than the Dreyfus agitation, and no trace of the latter is to be found in "Fécondité," the first volume in which it was unfolded. But as Zola proceeded with his work he was naturally influenced by all he had experienced and witnessed during the turmoil. As will presently be seen, the Affair eventually invaded his pages, but apart from that matter it hastened an evolution of his mind. He had begun life as an Individualist, it was as an unattached Socialist that he ended it, and this would have happened, no doubt, whether there had been a Dreyfus case or not. Without the Affair, however, the evolution might have remained less definite, less complete. The Affair showed him that the existing social edifice was in some respects even more rotten than he had previously believed. There could be no doubt of it, the facts were manifest; and it followed that there was now less call for exposure than for remedial measures. As his opinions with regard to such measures differed largely from those of the men in power, the call upon him was all the greater. He therefore tried to indicate broadly on what lines reforms might proceed, and to sketch the future effect which such reforms might have on the community.

It has been said that in his last works his imagination failed him, that it was quite spent, and that he could no longer have produced a work of art had he tried. That theory is wrong, based on ignorance of what was then in Zola's mind. If he had lived long enough to write the novel on the "Rat de l'Opéra,"[1] of which he talked so often to the present writer, the world would have seen that the powers of the novelist were undiminished. But in the great crisis through which France was passing Zola held that for a time, at all events, his duty lay in other work.

"Fécondité," of which some mention was made in the previous chapter, treated a subject which had long haunted him — in a measure for personal reasons — but it was, of course, from the national standpoint that he dealt with it in his book. The question of the decline in the birth rate and the mortality among infants had not only occupied the attention of French sociologists and scientists for several years, but various novels based upon it had already been written — novels indicating that the whole tendency of the times was to transform matrimony into legalised prostitution, in accordance with certain specious neo-Malthusian theories. Zola rightly held that unless that tendency were checked there could be no social regeneration at all. Thus he placed the subject in question at the head of his series. While he was preparing "Fécondité" in England the present writer was often able to glance at the documents, medical works, reports, letters from eminent scientists, and so forth, on which the novelist based his account of the noxious practices prevalent in various strata of French society, and he holds that far from "Fécondité" being an exaggerated picture it did not represent more than two-thirds of the actual truth. On the other hand, when Zola proceeded to sketch the healthy life which ought to replace the existing one, enthusiasm led him further than was necessary, though, after all, he did not go beyond the provisions of the "marriage-books" which the French authorities hand to every bridegroom at the conclusion of the marriage ceremony — books beginning with a signed and stamped certificate of the union just celebrated and continuing with enough blank forms to register the birth of *twelve* children — the number which Zola bestowed on his hero and heroine, Mathieu and Marianne.

---

[1] See *ante*, p. 430.

Fruitfulness, said he, created the home, whence sprang the city; and from the idea of citizenship that of the fatherland proceeded. There could be no nation unless there were fruitfulness, which became, then, a first national duty. The second was work, which Zola considered under various aspects in his next novel, "Travail." He held that every man ought to work for his own support and that of his family, and he also regarded work as a panacea for many ills. But he turned more particularly to the consideration of the circumstances under which work was done in the modern world, to the condition of the toilers generally, the great capital and labour problem. In that connection he was greatly influenced by the state of France at the time he wrote, the onward march of Socialism, the innumerable strikes, the complaints, the demands rising on all sides. He felt that matters could not remain as they were. But though he was in the higher sense a great fighter he was the adversary of mere brute force; and dreading an armed collision between the classes, he tried to devise, to suggest, a pacific remedial evolution.

As he was unwilling to imprison himself or anybody else within the narrow and stringent bonds of certain forms of

Socialism, it was to the broader and more generous ideas of Charles Fourier that he finally inclined, striving to adapt them to the needs of a new century. It is certain that some of his suggestions remained nebulous, that several were not strictly practical, but it should be remembered that at the outset of "Les Quatre Évangiles" he had announced that the series would form a kind of "poem in prose, divided into four chants." It would be unfair to neglect that statement, for it shows he did not intend "Fécondité" and "Travail" to be taken as severely practical works. They partook, as one has said, of a constructive character — as opposed to Zola's earlier and purely destructive writings — but they were not intended to be the final plans of an architect or an engineer, or the ultimate provisions of a new code. They were the roughest of sketches, so to say, suggestions which here and there might be found useful by those who might have to solve the problems which they reviewed. And it must be at least admitted that their tendency was good. In "Fécondité" it was most healthful; in "Travail" it was most pacific and calming, Zola's manifest intention being to quiet the angry passions of the hour, to direct Labour towards peaceable courses in its quest for the fulfilment of its aspirations.

Such books cannot be judged as one would judge ordinary novels. They were, to a certain point, drafted in the form of novels in order that they might reach the great majority; but Zola, with superb disdain, now cast many of the rules and conventions of novel-writing aside. After the publication of "Travail," Vizetelly sent him word that the English translation had been regarded less as a work of fiction than as a combination of sermon and pamphlet, to which the reviewers and the public did not seem to take very kindly. Zola replied under date of May 8, 1901:

"I have never consulted the tastes of the public, and I am too old nowadays to modify my work in order to please it. I am writing these books with a certain purpose before me, a purpose in which the question of form is of secondary importance. I have no intention of trying to amuse people or thrill them with excitement. I am merely placing certain problems before them, and suggesting in some respects certain solutions, showing what I hold to be wrong and what I think would be right. When I have finished these 'Évangiles,' when 'Vérité' and 'Justice' are written, it is quite possible that I shall write shorter and livelier books. Personally I should have everything to gain by doing so, but for the present I am fulfilling a duty which the state of my country imposes on me."

Most of "Travail" was written in 1900, in December of which year it began to appear in "L'Aurore." In April, 1901, it was published as a volume.[1] A little later in the same year, the virulence of the Dreyfus agitation having subsided and public attention being turned to the Assumptionists and other religious orders, in connection with M. Waldeck-Rousseau's Association Bill, the director of the Opéra Comique in Paris thought the moment favourable for the production of a one-act lyrical drama, entitled "L'Ouragan," the prose libretto of which, set to music by M. Bruneau, had been written by Zola some years previously. "L'Ouragan" was not a particularly ambitious work and the moderate success it achieved was perhaps all that could have been expected for it.

After the production of that piece Zola began to consider the subject of his next book, "Vérité," which gave him no little trouble. It seems likely that when he first planned his series he had thought of showing in this particular volume that scientific truth, and not the assertions, delusions, and errors of religious systems, should be taken as the guiding principle of life. But the Dreyfus case, which had intruded into a few pages of "Travail," haunted him. He knew that it had supplied one of the most shocking exhibitions of mendacity that the world had ever witnessed; and it followed that "Vérité" ought not merely to inculcate a belief in scientific truth. It also ought to recall people to the practice of truthfulness in their everyday life. Thus Zola's subject expanded. He had always intended to show the evil effects of the training given to children in certain so-called religious schools, where, according to his view, their minds were perverted, deprived of all self-reliance by the intrusion of the supernatural. But the Dreyfus case had shown him there was more than that. The mendacity so current throughout the period of the Affair had come almost entirely from men trained by the Roman Church. Moreover that Church's share in the Affair, its hostility and its intrigues against the Republic under cover of the anti-Semitic agitation, were now every day more apparent. Zola had repeatedly declared that he would write no novel on the Dreyfus case, for he did not wish anybody to say that he had earned a single *sou*, directly or indirectly, by the Affair. But it was ever beside him, with its influence, its revelations, its lessons. And it seemed to him fit that everybody should understand that in one way and another such turmoil, frenzy, and mendacity would never have been possible if it had not been for the Roman Church. The case haunting him more and more, he gradually yielded to the obsession, resolving, however, to cast the military men on one side, for after all they had only been agents, in some degree the victims of their training. In lieu of them he would depict those whom he regarded as the real culprits. It had been settled that the book should deal with school life; and it would be easy to adapt a kind of Dreyfus case to such surroundings. A Jewish schoolmaster might be substituted for a Jewish officer, while as for the crime which it would be necessary to impute to him, there had been a terrible affair at Lille, not long previously, the murder of a little boy, in which a certain Brother Flamidien — who was spirited away by his colleagues — had been implicated. Some such brother would represent Esterhazy in Zola's work, Dreyfus being represented by Simon, the Jewish schoolmaster.

---

[1] "Travail," Paris, Fasquelle, 1901, 18mo, 666 pages; some copies on special papers, etc. Seventy-seventh thousand in 1903.

That Zola repeatedly hesitated with respect to this *pastiche* of the Dreyfus case is certain. In the summer of 1901 he wrote to Vizetelly that he was preparing "Vérité," but that none of it would be ready for several months, for he was still doubtful whether he would introduce certain elements into the work or not. Finally, as the only means, perhaps, of relieving his mind, he took the plunge, resolving upon an adaptation of the Affair on the lines one has indicated. Yet he again paused more than once, as he mentioned in another letter. That was written on September 12, when he further stated that he would have nothing ready until the ensuing month of January, 1902, when he wrote to Vizetelly:

> "Thanks for your good wishes for the New Year, and pray accept ours for yourself and all your family. I find I shall not have 'Vérité' ready for publication as a book until next October,

and that the *feuilleton* will not begin to appear until the early days of June. As you would like to have a few chapters in advance, however, I think I may be able to send the first ones about the end of next month. . . . I wish you good health, good work, and am very cordially yours,

"ÉMILE ZOLA."

Again there came delays, perhaps, because for the purposes of his book Zola was following the campaign against the religious orders.[1] At all events the proofs of the first four chapters were not sent to Messrs. Chatto till July 10, on which date the novelist wrote to Vizetelly that the serial issue would begin in "L'Aurore" on September 10. About this time, July, Zola had completed the actual writing of the work, and revised the proofs of Book I, the first forty pages of which were as good as anything he had ever penned. But as the work proceeded its hybrid character became manifest. As the Affaire Flamidien had suggested itself to Zola's mind it would have been better if the criminal part of the work had been confined to it. The grafting of the Dreyfus case upon another one led to various difficulties in the narrative, and the very restraint which Zola imposed upon himself in his veiled account of the real Affair was prejudicial to the general effect. In the writer's opinion the best part of the work was that describing the conflict between the hero Marc and his wife, Geneviève, the former a free-thinker, the latter a product of Catholic training, who after forgetting her faith amid her love, remembered it when the question of training and educating her daughter arose.

---

[1] In the early parts of this year, 1902, Messrs. Raoul de Saint-Arroman and Charles Hugot produced a dramatic version of "La Terre" which attracted considerable attention. Some scenes were certainly interesting, but the play was deficient in cohesion. The same authors had previously adapted "Au Bonheur des Dames" for the stage. Subsequent to Zola's death M. de Saint-Arroman related in "Le Siècle" that on being asked what percentage of the author's rights in those plays should be paid to him the novelist had answered, "Whatever you like." Zola's enemies often insinuated that his nature was a grasping one in money as in other matters, but there was no truth whatever in the charge.

In that connection it may be mentioned that while Zola was in England during the Dreyfus case, he and Vizetelly in their strolls together discussed such matters more than once. Vizetelly had occasion to mention incidents well within his knowledge, which showed what serious trouble sometimes supervened when husband and wife were not of the same belief. Those conversations were doubtless remembered by Zola while he was writing "Vérité," in which, however, he described a far more dramatic and more painful situation than had been sketched to him. Chats of that kind led to discussions on religion generally. Vizetelly having mentioned various changes which had come over him in matters of belief, Zola replied by recounting some of his own experiences. Baptised a Catholic, he had made his First Communion, and though it was not true that he had ever been a choir-boy he had walked in religious processions. But a little later, rejecting now one dogma and now another, he had gradually freed himself from all such bonds, merely clinging for a time to such Deism as Voltaire suggested when he said or wrote: "*Si Dieu n'existait pas il faudrait l'inventer.*" Would Voltaire have used such words, however, if he had lived in the nineteenth century, the age of science? Zola thought not. For his part, in religion as in literature and other matters, he had been unable to tarry long in any half-way house. He had at last largely embraced the Positivism which acknowledges only that which is manifest, and which neither accepts nor denies that which is hypothesis only. Zola had known Littré, Wybouroff, and others, and he had at least met Pierre Laffitte; but his creed, apparently, had come to him less directly than indirectly, that is filtered through the philosophy of Taine. For the rest, as a great admirer of M. Berthelot, he was a fervent believer in Science. In spite of the many limits to our knowledge nowadays, he held that Science would some day succeed in solving directly or indirectly the whole riddle of the universe. Nevertheless, though he could not believe in the supernatural such as it was expounded by the Christian churches, he fully understood that many should cling to such beliefs in their craving for some certainty and consolation. It seemed to him monstrous, however, that so many grossly superstitious practices should have been grafted on the elementary principles of Christianity, and that the Roman Catholic Church should be primarily an engine of political domination. At the same time he held the opinion that there was far more broadness of views among Catholics generally than among Protestants. The latter certainly had one good trait, their minds might be narrower, their self-righteousness might be almost repulsive, but their rigidity of principles at least stimulated them to truthfulness, whereof, said Zola, they had given conspicuous proof during the Dreyfus case. The French Protestants were only a handful, but they possessed the courage of their convictions; they had not hesitated to testify to the truth, whatever risk they ran in doing so.

The reader may think it curious that Zola should have expressed himself as a Positivist, and yet have harboured sundry petty superstitions, such as were enumerated in a previous chapter. That contradiction may well have proceeded from the duality of his nature, to which reference has been made more than once. However, in the novelist's later years the writer never observed any particular trace of the curious practices recorded by Dr. Toulouse. He had at least largely rid himself of them. The only sign he gave of arithmomania while he was in England was to count the women's hairpins which he saw littering the streets when he took his walks abroad; but he did that, he explained, to occupy his mind when he was alone and because he was struck by the vast number of hairpins which Englishwomen contrived to lose. Once or twice, too, in conversation he spoke of his luck, but people often do that without putting any particular faith in luck. In England he had certainly relinquished the practice of fingering things or setting them in particular positions before he left a room, and he gave no sign that he was haunted by any fear of death. Of that, on the occasions when he was ill, he spoke quite calmly, though in the spirit of a man who held that when one died it was for ever. At various times he had given some attention to spiritualism, but had found no little imposture in it, and nothing, said he, had convinced him of the survival of the individual soul.

Throughout the summer of 1902 he remained at Médan, correcting further proofs of "Vérité," and making a few preparations for "Justice," which was to have been the last of his "Évangiles." In August he wrote half a dozen times to Vizetelly respecting the translation of "Vérité" and its publication in England and America. Such business letters are of little interest, however, to the general public. It may just be mentioned that he said on one occasion, "Times are still very hard, but one consoles oneself by working"; the reference in this case being less to pecuniary matters than to his position in France generally, for he still remained under a cloud, as it were, in consequence of his participation in the Affair. In the early part of September he once more wrote to Vizetelly about "Vérité," and then came silence. At that moment, however, there was no occasion for further correspondence. So a few weeks passed, Vizetelly steadily proceeding with his translation of "Vérité" which had begun to appear in "Reynolds's Newspaper." But all at once, on September 29, telegrams from Paris startled the world with the news that Émile Zola had been found dead in his bedroom and that his wife had narrowly escaped dying with him. Circulation was also given to an absurd rumour that the case was one of suicide. On receipt of the news, Vizetelly, naturally enough, started for Paris.

On the previous day, Sunday, September 28, Zola and his wife had quitted Médan to take up their autumn and winter quarters at 21 *bis* Rue de Bruxelles, Paris, of which house they rented the ground and the first floors, the upper stories being tenanted by other persons, who by means of a communicating doorway came and went by the staircase of the adjoining house, in such wise that the Zolas were isolated from those who dwelt above them. Their chief apartment on the ground floor was a spacious dining-room, with a verandah whence one looked into a pleasant garden. Upstairs were two drawing-rooms, two principal bedrooms, a dressing and bath room, and the novelist's study; and in the winter all these apartments were warmed by hot air from an apparatus in the cellars. Naturally that apparatus had not been used during the summer, and thus the rooms were chilly when the Zolas returned from Médan. A fire was therefore lighted in their bedroom — with some difficulty, it would seem, for the chimney did not draw well. This chimney was common both to the Zolas' bedroom and to some apartments overhead, occupied by other tenants, one of whom had recently had it swept in its upper part. The sweeping, it is thought, may have brought down sundry fragments of brickwork and cement, which remained obstructing the lower part of the chimney, the Zolas on their side having given no orders for sweeping it, as, on account of the heating apparatus in the cellars, it was seldom used by them. In any case, whatever may have been the exact cause, the chimney was certainly obstructed, and on the evening of September 28 Madame Zola, observing that the fire burnt very badly, expressed an intention of having the chimney examined by some workmen who were engaged on various repairs in the rooms.

She and her husband sat down to dinner that evening about eight o'clock. They were very hungry and made a hearty meal. Then, at an early hour, being somewhat tired by their removal from the country to town, they retired to rest. At that moment Madame Zola observed that the bedroom fire was smouldering, and asked her husband if he wished it to be extinguished. He answered that he did not think it necessary, for it would soon burn out. Then one or the other lowered to within a few inches of the hearth the sheet-iron *tablier*, a kind of screen or shutter with which most French fireplaces are provided. They went to bed and fell asleep, but about three o'clock in the morning Madame Zola suddenly awoke, experiencing a feeling of great oppression. Her head was heavy and she was seized with nausea.

She managed to get out of bed for the purpose of going to the adjoining dressing-room, but was no sooner on her feet than faintness came over her and she had to cling to the bedstead for support. At last she contrived to drag herself to the dressing-room, where she was able to breathe more freely. But the feeling of nausea persisted, and at last came violent vomiting, which kept her in the dressing-room for three quarters of an hour. This, however, helped to save her life; and feeling considerably relieved, she quitted the dressing-room and returned to bed. Her coming and going had wakened her husband, and after scolding a little pet dog which slept in the room on an arm-chair, from which it had climbed upon the bed, Madame Zola, thinking that she heard her husband complain, turned to him and inquired if he also felt unwell. "It is curious, but I do," he answered, explaining that his symptoms were akin to hers. She thereupon suggested that she should summon the servants, but he replied: "It is not worth while. We are both suffering from indigestion. It will be nothing, we shall be all right to-morrow." Then, intending to open a window or go to the dressing-room as his wife had done, he rose, looked for his slippers, and took a few steps. But all at once a fainting fit came upon him, and he was too far from the bedstead to use it as a support. His wife heard him gasp, then fall upon the floor. She called him, but he did not answer. She wished to go to his help, but again an oppressive stifling sensation suddenly came upon her and she was unable to rise or even press the electric bell in order to summon assistance. By a last despairing effort she managed to sit up in bed, but immediately fell back again, losing consciousness. That was all she was able to relate when she was subsequently questioned; she could remember nothing more.

At eight o'clock in the morning the two workmen who were making repairs in the house arrived, and Madame Monnier, the doorkeeper, set them on some quiet little jobs in order that her employers might not be disturbed. They, the Zolas, usually rose between eight and nine, but that morning time went by and they gave no sign of life. About nine o'clock Madame Monnier's husband, one of the two men-servants, knocked repeatedly at the bedroom door but obtained no answer. He and his wife then became alarmed, and with the help of one of the workmen burst the door open. To their horror and amazement they saw Zola lying in his night-gown on the floor, his feet just touching the rug beside the bed. One of the party at once opened a window, while Madame Monnier went to the bed where her mistress was lying unconscious. There was a second bedstead in the room, a small iron one, and to this some of the servants carried their master's body, then hurried in search of a doctor. The first to arrive was Dr. Marc Berman, a practitioner of Russian origin, who happened to be in a chemist's shop in the vicinity. He at once examined Zola and found no signs of life, though the body was still warm. Death had occurred little more than an hour previously, in all likelihood shortly after eight o'clock. Turning to Madame Zola, the doctor found her in an extremely weak state, but some hope of saving her remained, and indeed at the expiration of some twenty minutes the efforts to revive her to consciousness began to take effect, though they had to be continued for fully another hour.

Dr. Berman had sent to the chemist's for oxygen, ether, and an electrical battery; and in the hope that Zola might not be quite dead every possible effort to stimulate life was made. Artificial respiration, rhythmical tractoration of the tongue, injections of ether, frictions, the application of hot-water bottles, the electrisation of the diaphragm,—all the devices known to medical science were put into practice and persevered with for three hours by Dr. Berman and Drs. Lenormand and Main, who joined him. But nothing had any effect: Zola was indeed dead.[1]

Meantime telegrams were despatched to the novelist's intimate friends and his wife's relatives. The district Commissary of Police who had been summoned, communicated with the Prefect, and an official inquiry into the tragedy was at once ordered. Madame Laborde, a cousin of the Zolas, was soon on the spot, followed by M. Charpentier, M. Fasquelle, M. Desmoulin, and others; and late in the afternoon Madame Zola was removed to Dr. Defaut's Maison de Santé in the Avenue du Roule, Neuilly, in such wise that the investigations were pursued in all freedom. The bedroom chimney proved to be both defective and obstructed; and when a fire was lighted and some guinea-pigs were left in the room for a night, the animals, though still alive on the morrow, were then found in a hebetated state.[2] Meantime an examination of Zola's remains was made, the doctors afterwards reporting that all the vital organs were sound, though the blood was saturated with oxide of carbon.[1] This, it may be mentioned, fixes on the globules of the blood, whence it expels all oxygen, thereby producing drowsiness, numbness, and at last a species of paralysis. Perhaps in Zola's case the blood-poisoning may not have been the only cause of death; for it is possible that he might have survived in spite of it, if, like his wife, he had been able to relieve himself, and if he had not fallen on the floor of the room, where the atmosphere, impregnated with carbonic acid gas, may have been almost unbreathable. However, the experts virtually agreed in ascribing the death to the poisoning of the blood by carbonic oxide.

---

[1] The pet dog which had slept in the bedroom was in a very weak state, but it had vomited during the night, and this may have helped to save it. Another little dog which had remained in the dressing-room had not been ill.

[2] The statement current in some newspapers at the time that the fire which had such a fatal result was of artificial fuel such as compressed coal dust was inaccurate. Coal was employed, and the writer believes it to have been Welsh anthracite, for Zola bought such coal in considerable quantities, chiefly for the electric light installation at Médan, whither it was brought up the Seine by barge from Rouen. That such coal would not burn well in a defective chimney is certain. It ignites with difficulty unless there be a good current of air.

Madame Zola remained at Dr. Defaut's house for some days, regaining her strength very slowly. At first her husband's death was concealed from her; she believed that he was only ill like herself. But the sad truth had to be told, and then, after a violent explosion of grief, realising that she had duties to fulfil, she insisted on returning home in spite of her weakness. It was a terrible home-coming. Her husband's body had been embalmed with more or less success — for signs of decomposition had set in directly after the post-mortem examination — and laid in its coffin, which

---

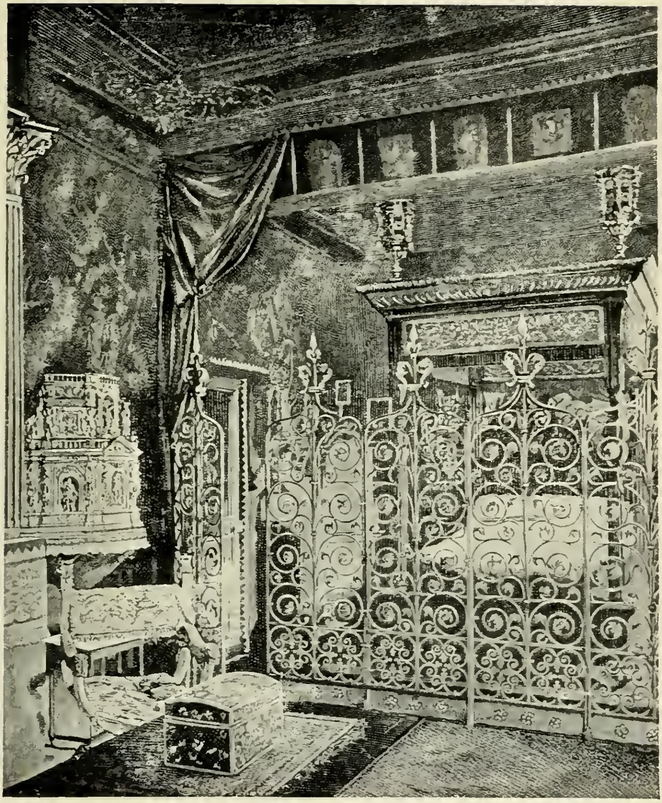
On the other hand, it throws out little if any smoke, and it is a significant circumstance that none was found in the bedroom.

[1] The writer was in the house while the post-mortem examination was made, and to the best of his knowledge and belief it lasted about forty minutes. In view of the stifling fits induced by a form of angina from which Zola had suffered periodically ever since 1875, it was strange to hear that all the organs were sound. It is not for the writer to engage in any discussion with medical men, but he cannot reconcile their report with the complaint from which Zola undoubtedly suffered.

was placed in the study, where much of the novelist's work had been done. And it was there that the unhappy widow found it. But she gave proof of no little fortitude, and speedily signified her wishes and those which she knew to have been her husband's, in order that proper arrangements might be made in the dolorous circumstances which had now arisen.

The tragic character of Zola's death had created a sensation throughout the civilised world. Every day for an entire week the vestibule of the house in the Rue de Bruxelles was crowded with notabilities in literature, science, art, and politics, who came to inscribe their names in the registers. Telegrams, letters, and addresses of sympathy were continually arriving from all parts of France and from well-nigh every foreign country, emanating now from societies and associations, now from eminent men, now too from members of the French and foreign Governments. Wreaths and coronals and other combinations of flowers followed in profusion, and a public subscription was speedily started for a monument in Zola's honour. But the enemy did not disarm. Vile libels were sold on the boulevards. Henri Rochefort wrote a foul article in "L'Intransigeant," insinuating that Zola had committed suicide because he had discovered Dreyfus to be really guilty. Édouard Drumont declared in "La Libre Parole" that the name of Zola inspired horror in all who possessed French hearts. "La Patrie" shrieked that the dead man had defended treason and vilified the flag. The renegade Jews of "Le Gaulois," after asserting that he had shown no pity for France, declared, "Nevertheless we are Christians, and we therefore hope that God will show some mercy to this wretched creature who knew no compassion." The said Jews, by the way, after the usual fashion of renegades, had never evinced the slightest pity for the martyr of Devil's Island, but in their Catholic fervour had fiendishly approved of the abominable tortures devised by the Under Secretary for the Colonies, the strangely named Lebon. As for "La Croix," the organ of the religious orders, it viewed Zola's death with unctuous complacency, admitting that the occurrence might well have been "a merciful accident by which at least one crime had been spared that wretched man." But another clerical rag, calling itself "Le Peuple Français," declared with all solemnity that God had stifled Zola in punishment for his sins. Others enlarged on that theme: it was by no mere coincidence, they said, that Zola had died on Michaelmas Day, St. Michael had really descended in the Rue de Bruxelles! Thus Paris was again divided into two hostile camps, Dreyfusites and anti-Dreyfusites confronting one another threateningly as if the Affair had sprung to life again from Zola's ashes.

There had been great changes, however, in government circles. An insidious malady having compelled M. Waldeck-Rousseau to resign office after carrying the policy of Republican defence no further than its first stage, the prime ministership had passed to M. Combes, a man then very much misunderstood by most people, who ascribed to him a vacillating character, whereas his friends were aware that he really possessed a remarkably strong will, and that if he now and again seemed to follow rather than direct the course of events this was mere diplomacy on the part of one who never lost sight of the goal he desired to attain. M. Combes and his colleagues were undoubtedly on the side



Zola's Bedroom

of truth and justice, and though, in the state of public opinion, they felt they could not appeal to the Legislature to accord a national funeral to Zola's remains, they at once decided that the Government should participate in the obsequies.

Zola's will, a very brief one, executed in 1883 and bequeathing all his property to his wife, contained no indication of where or how he desired to be buried. But the widow was well acquainted with his desires, and gave instructions that the interment should take place in Paris and, as in Hugo's case, without any religious rites. The question was raised whether an application should be made to the authorities for the military honours to which Zola was entitled as an officer of the Legion of Honour, his suspension from which had ceased with the Amnesty. It was decided to make no such application, but to accept the honours if they were tendered, which decision was scarcely taken when the Minister of War, General André, signified his resolve that they should be accorded. He further sent his *chef de cabinet*, General Percin, to the Rue de Bruxelles to tender his condolences, whereupon the Nationalist newspapers began to shriek that the army was disgraced. As it was also asserted by a writer of "Le Gaulois," a renegade Jew named Pollonnais, that General Percin, having met ex-Captain Dreyfus at the house, had shaken hands with him, Count Boniface de Castellane, the notorious husband of a daughter of Jay Gould, wrote to General Percin inquiring if this were true. The contemptuous answer which ensued led to a duel in which each combatant slightly wounded the other. As a matter of fact, General Percin had not met M. Dreyfus when he called in the Rue de Bruxelles, and had therefore had no occasion either to offer or refuse him his hand.

The victim of the military and clerical factions had naturally been admitted to view the remains of the man who had so ably championed his cause, and it was also natural that he should desire to attend the funeral. But every effort was now being made to rouse anti-Semitic passions, and Madame Zola dreaded lest the interment should be disturbed by some horrible riot. She therefore begged M. Dreyfus to refrain from attending, pointing out to him that the police authorities, like herself, were of opinion that his presence would give rise to great disturbances. M. Dreyfus was deeply affected by the request; he regarded his attendance at the obsequies as a matter of duty to his defender, and felt that everybody would accuse him of cowardice should he hide himself away. At last Madame Zola's entreaties prevailed, and he consented to do as she desired. The reports of this interview which appeared in the newspapers checked the Nationalist outcry, and on the eve of the funeral, when it had been ascertained that the authorities had decided to take every possible precaution to preserve order, it was felt that the decision with respect to M. Dreyfus might be altered. He was therefore informed that he might attend, and he gladly availed himself of the permission.

The obsequies were celebrated on Sunday, October 5, in the presence of a vast concourse of people. The distance from the Rue de Bruxelles to the place of interment, the Montmartre cemetery, was fortunately short, and to keep the crowd in check the Place Moncey and the Boulevard de Clichy were lined with police and municipal guards. Two squadrons of cavalry were also kept in readiness, though virtually out of sight, one assembling on the Place Vintimille, within a stone's-throw of the Rue de Bruxelles. Access to that street was afforded only to the bearers of special "laissez-passers," the numerous deputations assembling in neighboring thoroughfares and joining the procession on the road. In front of the house in the Rue de Bruxelles a detachment of the Twenty-eighth Infantry of the Line was mustered, under the command of Captain Olivier, an officer who had always believed in the innocence of Dreyfus, and who after refusing to participate in a subscription in honour of the forger Henry had fought a duel with one of the latter's partisans. Three cars bearing a profusion of wreaths, many extremely large, — splendid chrysanthemums of various hues being the predominant flowers, — preceded the hearse, on which a few other wreaths were placed. The drums beat and the soldiers presented arms when the coffin was brought from the house, escorted by the pall-bearers and followed by relatives and intimate friends. The pall-bearers were MM. Ludovic Halévy and Abel Hermant, respectively Presidents of the Société des Auteurs Dramatiques and the Société des Gens de Lettres, MM. Charpentier and Fasquelle, Zola's publishers, M. Théodore Duret, the historian, M. Alfred Bruneau, the composer, M. Octave Mirbeau, the novelist and playwright, who had held Zola's power of attorney during his exile in England, and M. Briat, the secretary of the Labour Exchange. Immediately behind the hearse walked MM. Laborde and Loiseau, relatives of the deceased, M. Fernand Desmoulin and Dr. Larat, intimate friends, followed by M. Anatole France and a few others. Then came Dr. Le Prince and Vizetelly, between whom, with his hands in theirs, was little Jacques. . . . The representatives of the Government followed. All the state departments were represented, and M. Chaumié, Minister of Public Instruction, attended in person. Then, after a crowd of celebrities in literature, science, art, politics, and law, came innumerable deputations, many of them carrying wreaths and coronals, a *cortège* of fifty thousand persons, advancing amid the concourse of spectators whom the military and police held back. The order was perfect, all heads were uncovered, all voices stilled. As the hearse passed on, the police saluted, the military presented arms. Again, inside the cemetery, on either hand, all along the Avenue St. Charles, and the Avenue de Montmorency, men of the Garde Républicaine stood at attention and presented arms until the *cortège* at last halted on an open space, where a tribune had been erected for the funeral orations.

The first address was delivered by M. Chaumié, who began by speaking of the terribly sudden death of the departed author, which had sent a thrill of stupefaction through the world. From all quarters, both at home and abroad, there had come messages of condolence, and the Government of the Republic had made it a point of honour to be represented at the obsequies. As others would speak of Zola's literary genius, he (the Minister) would refer more particularly to the mission which the deceased had set himself, — that of painting so striking a picture of society, with its sufferings, its passions, and its vices, that even those with the poorest sight would perceive that remedial measures were imperatively needed. Whenever a cause had seemed to him just he had espoused it without hesitation, braving all furious or perfidious anger, the wildest insults, the most unjust hatred, the most painful betrayals. And thus the humble and the wretched, feeling that they had lost a great friend, were now mingling their gratitude and their grief with the admiration of those who deplored the immense loss which had befallen literature.

It was particularly from the literary standpoint that M. Abel Hermant next addressed the throng, and he did so admirably, setting forth both the characteristics and the limitations of the genius of Zola, who had perhaps failed to show sufficient penetration when dealing with the psychology of certain individual characters, but who had excelled in depicting what was called "the crowd." He had been a master in the art of assembling facts and personages: his crowds and his paintings of nature were full of life. And he had never sought common popularity. He had sacrificed nothing in order to curry favour with the multitude, as was done by those who were eager for success at any price. Far from flattering the masses, he had braved them, measured himself against them fearlessly, and not only in connection with the terrible truths enunciated in his novels had a clamour of anger and menace arisen around him. At last, passing to his peroration,—a very appropriate one,—M. Hermant said:

> "At the close of one of his finest works[1] Zola describes a ceremony such as this, one unattended by a great concóurse of people, but none the less painful for the few friends pressing around the remains of an unappreciated artist. On retiring from the graveside one of that artist's most notable companions, one who resembles Zola like a brother,[2] speaks a few words, — words of duty, comfort, and hope. Those words are certainly the only farewell that Zola himself desires from us, gentlemen, and I should feel I had failed

---

[1] "L'Œuvre."

[2] Sandoz.

in giving expression to one of his last desires, did I leave this spot without repeating those words to you. I certainly did not think that the duty would come so soon, nor did I think it would be for me to lend my humble voice to my master in order to remind the multitude around me of the humble yet magnificent device of his whole life: 'Let us work!'"

Only discreet marks of approval had attended M. Chaumié's speech. Now, however, for the first time in the day's proceedings, a burst of applause rang out. But M. Hermant had quitted the tribune, and in his place appeared M. Anatole France, who came to bid Zola farewell on behalf of all his friends. M. France had testified for him at the Paris Assizes, he had supported the cause of truth and justice from the outset, and moreover, now that Zola was gone, his own eminent position in literature seemed all the greater. Thus, from every standpoint, it was well that he should have been selected to say the last words. He spoke as follows:

"Gentlemen, — In rendering to Émile Zola on behalf of his friends the honours which are due to him I will say nothing of my grief and theirs. Those who leave great names should not be celebrated by lamentations, but by manly praise and a sincere picturing of their life and work. The literary work of Zola was immense. . . . When one saw that work arising, stone by stone, its immensity caused surprise. Some admired, some were astonished, some praised, some blamed it. Praise and blame were bestowed with equal vehemence. The great writer was occasionally assailed — I know it by my own example — with reproaches which were sincere and yet unjust. Invectives and apologies intermingled, and still and ever the work grew. Now that one can contemplate the whole of its colossal structure the spirit pervading it may also be discerned. It was a spirit of kindliness. Zola had a kindly nature. The candour and the simplicity of great souls were his. He pictured vice with a rough and virtuous hand. His seeming pessimism, the sombre humour cast over more than one of his pages, scarcely conceals his real optimism, his stubborn faith in the advance of human intelligence and knowledge. In his novels, those social studies, he pursued with vigorous hatred an idle and frivolous society, a base and baleful aristocracy; he fought against the evil of the age, — the power of money. Though a democrat, he never flattered the multitude, he strove to show it what slavery proceeds from ignorance, what dangers come from strong drink, which delivers it over, senseless and defenceless, to every form of oppression, every kind of wretchedness, every sort of shame. He fought against social evils wherever he met them. They were the things he hated. But in his last books he showed the whole of his love for mankind. He strove to divine, to foresee, a better social state. He desired that an ever increasing number of the human race might be called to happiness in the world. He set his hopes on the human mind, on science. He awaited from new powers of machinery the progressive enfranchisement of toiling humanity. A sincere realist, he was nevertheless an ardent idealist. In grandeur his work can only be compared to that of Tolstoï. At the two extremities of European thought the lyre has raised two vast ideal cities. Both are generous and pacific; but whereas Tolstoï's is the city of resignation, Zola's is the city of work.

"While he was still young, Zola acquired fame. In quietude and celebrity he was enjoying the fruits of his labour when he suddenly wrested himself from all repose, from the work which he loved, from the peaceful pleasures of his life. Doubtless, in presence of a coffin only grave and serene words should be spoken, calmness and harmony should be preserved. But you are aware, gentlemen, that calmness is found only in justice, that repose is found only in truth. I speak not of philosophical truth, the subject of our endless discussions, but of that moral truth which we can all detect because it is relative, sensible, in con-

> formity with our nature, and so near to us that a child can touch it with the hand. I will not fail, then, in my duty to justice which orders me to praise that which is praiseworthy. I will not hide the truth beneath cowardly silence. Why, indeed, should we be silent? Are they, his slanderers, silent? I will say only what is necessary before this bier, but I will say all that is necessary."

At this point M. Anatole France paused, interrupted by repeated cries of "Bravo!" Those who were gathered around the tribune had listened in attentive silence to the earlier part of his discourse, but from this point almost every sentence was punctuated by applause. The crowd in the cemetery was so dense, stretching away to the very gates, that thousands were unable to hear a word of the speech, and the "Bravos!" which rang out from those who were more fortunately placed, naturally excited the others, whom the police restrained with considerable difficulty. Meantime M. Anatole France was continuing:

> "Having to recall the struggle upon which Zola entered in the cause of truth and justice, is it possible for me to preserve silence respecting those who were bent on ruining the cause of an innocent man, those who felt that if he should be saved, they would be lost, and who with all the desperate audacity of fear therefore strove to overwhelm him. How can I remove them from your gaze when I have to show you Zola rising, weak and unarmed, before them? Can I remain silent about their lies? That would mean silence as to his heroic rectitude. Can I remain silent about their crimes? That would mean silence as to his virtues. Can I remain silent about the outrages and slanders with which they pursued him? That would mean silence as to his reward and honours. Can I remain silent about their shame? That would mean silence as to his glory. No! I will speak out.

"With the calmness and firmness which the spectacle of death imparts, I will recall the dim days when egotism and fear had their seats in the government councils. People were beginning to know something of the iniquity, but it was supported, defended, by such public and secret powers that the most resolute hesitated. Those whose duty it was to speak out remained silent. Some of the best, who feared nothing personally, dreaded lest they should involve their party in frightful dangers. Led astray by monstrous lies, excited by odious declamation, the multitude of the people, believing they were betrayed, grew exasperated. . . . The darkness thickened. Sinister silence reigned. And it was then that Zola addressed to the President of the Republic that well-measured yet terrible letter which denounced falsity and collusion.

"With what fury was he assailed by the criminals, by their interested defenders, by their involuntary accomplices, by coalitions of all the reactionary parties, by the deceived multitude, you know that full well. You saw innocently minded people joining in all simplicity the hideous *cortège* of hireling brawlers. You heard the howls of rage and the cries of death which pursued him even into the Palais de Justice during that long trial when he was judged in voluntary ignorance, on false testimony, amid the clatter of swords. I see here some of those who then stood beside him, who shared his dangers. Let them say if ever more insult was hurled at a just man! Let them say too with what firmness he endured it! Let them say if his robust kindliness, his manly pity, ever deserted him, if his constancy was for a moment shaken! In those abominable days more than one good citizen despaired of the salvation of the country, of the moral fortune of France. Not only were the Republicans defending the present *régime* terrified, but one of the most resolute enemies of the *régime*, an irreconcilable Socialist, exclaimed bitterly, 'If present-day society be so corrupt as this, one will not even be able to found a new society on its fragments!' Indeed, justice, honour, common sense, all seemed lost.

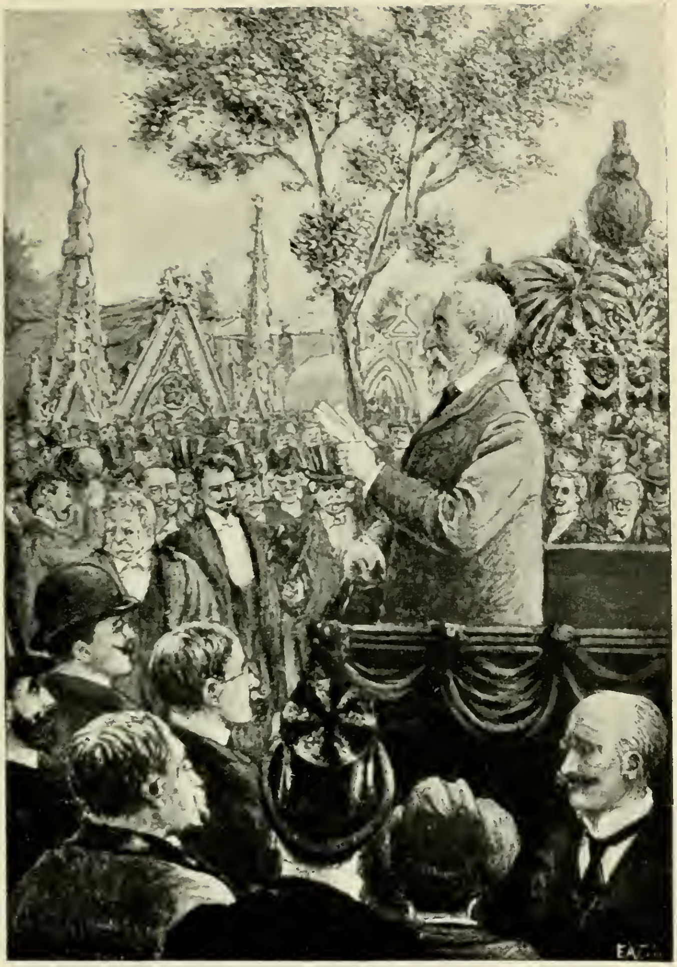
"But all was saved. Zola had not merely revealed a judicial error, he had denounced the conspiracy of all the forces of violence and oppression leagued together to slay social justice, Republicanism, freedom of thought in France. His courageous words awoke the country. The consequences of his deed are incalculable. They unroll themselves to-day in power and majesty, they spread out indefinitely, they have determined a movement of social equity which will not stop. A new order of things is arising, based on a better sense of justice, on a deeper knowledge of the rights of all.

"Gentlemen, there is only one country in the world where such great things could have been accomplished. How beautiful is the genius of our fatherland! How beautiful is that soul of France which in past centuries taught equity to Europe and the world! France is the land of ornate reason and kindly thoughts, the land of equitable magistrates and humane philosophers, the land of Turgot, of Montesquieu, of Voltaire, of Malesherbes. And Zola deserved well of the country by refusing to despair of justice in France. We must not pity him for having endured and suffered. Let us rather envy him! Set above the most prodigious heap of outrages ever raised by folly, ignorance, and malice, his glory attains to inaccessible heights. Let us envy him: he honoured his country and the world by immense literary work and by a great deed. Let us envy him: his destiny and his heart gave him the grandest fate: in him at one moment was set the conscience of mankind!"

The presence of death, all around one in that great cemetery, was quite forgotten when M. Anatole France ceased speaking. Tumultuous applause arose while relatives and friends were taking up their positions for the march past of the thousands attending the obsequies. Several ladies, Mesdames Laborde, Charpentier, Fasquelle, and others,[1] had joined the family party, which stood in line on the verge of a transverse avenue, immediately in front of the tomb of the famous Baron Hirsch. For two hours the

---

[1] Madame Zola was not present, her relatives and friends having entreated her to remain at home.



M. Anatole France delivering his oration
at the funeral of Émile Zola

march past continued. M. Dreyfus, accompanied by M. Gabriel Monod of the Institute of France, and M. Lalance, a former Alsatian deputy, passed unrecognised by the great majority. But Maître Labori and Colonel Picquart were acclaimed. A host of distinguished men went by, and after them came all the deputations, the town of Denain sending a pitman, a blacksmith, and a peasant, each attired in the costume of his calling, — the first with his "Davy," the second with his leather apron, the third shouldering his scythe. In a like spirit Freemasons wore their insignia, and again and again came wreaths of flowers and "immortelles," silver palms and other tributes, borne in procession as far as the provisional vault. Every now and then, moreover, some deputation halted for a moment before the hearse, and cries were raised of "Glory to Zola! Honour to the apostle of justice!" Others called, "Germinal! Germinal!" in memory of Zola's great book in which he had taken the part of the toilers against the greed of the capitalists. For the rest, the crowd was most orderly, and one was struck by the presence of an immense number of young men about twenty years of age, the electors and artisans of the future, with whom perhaps some day the great principles laid down by Zola may finally triumph. Not until the vast concourse had gone onward, one hundred and fifty persons passing every minute, did the hearse proceed to the temporary vault to which Zola's remains were quietly committed. There were a few disturbances outside the cemetery, where several parties of anti-Semites had now assembled, but these were speedily quelled by the police and the municipal guards. And thus the long ceremony, which had lasted some four hours, came to an end.

For several months, however, the great novelist's widow continued to receive tributes of sympathy. The municipalities of various towns bestowed the name of Rue or Boulevard Zola on one and another thoroughfare, thus testifying to the revulsion of feeling in favour of Dreyfus's champion. A considerable sum was yielded by the subscription[1] for a public monument to be erected in some part of Paris, perhaps the Tuileries garden, and a design for this monument was commissioned. In February, 1903, the novelist's last book "Vérité" was published.[2] Then in March the greater part of his library was sold at the Hôtel Drouot in Paris, some twenty-six hundred volumes being thus dispersed.[3] There was a curious illuminated manuscript breviary of the fourteenth century which Zola had used while writing "Le Rêve," and numerous historical, philosophical, medical, and other scientific works, with some volumes of voyages and travels, and collections of periodicals. None of the above, the breviary excepted, were of much value, but considerable interest attached to a very large collection of presentation copies of modern novels and stories, including all those of Guy de Maupassant and many by the Goncourts, Gustave Flaubert, Alphonse Daudet, Paul Bourget, Halévy, Huysmans, Marcel Prévost, Anatole France, Claretie, and others. All those works were inscribed to Zola by their authors. In a copy of Flaubert's "Tentation de St. Antoine" were written the words, "*à Zola un solide que j'aime*"; while the "Trois Contes" contained the inscription "*à Emile Zola, bon bougre! et du talent! son vieux, Gve. Flaubert.*" Some interest attached also to M. Waldeck-Rousseau's "Questions Sociales," published in 1900, for it was inscribed "*à Émile Zola en témoignage d'admiration*"—and yet M. Waldeck-Rousseau was the statesman who in that same year carried the Amnesty Law against which Zola so strongly protested! From this little circumstance one can divine what were M. Waldeck-Rousseau's private sentiments, whatever may have been his public declarations with respect to the Affair. The books sold at the Hôtel Drouot comprised also many of the translations of Zola's novels in different foreign languages, and the sale further included a variety of tapestry, curios, and works of art. The total proceeds were about six thousand one hundred pounds. It may be added that more than eight hundred of the inscribed presentation volumes were purchased by Mr. James Carleton Young, a well-known American book-collector, of Minneapolis, who proposes to establish in that city a magnificent library, in which every work will bear an inscription by its author. Autograph letters and manuscripts are also to be included in the collection, which already comprises several thousand volumes by dead and living writers in virtually all languages.[1]

---

[1] The writer believes that the subscription still remains open (March 1904), the amount received not being quite sufficient for a monument on the scale which the committee has in view. The treasurer is M. Lucien Fontaine, 1 Rue Jacob, Paris. The committee is a representative one of distinguished Frenchmen.

[2] "Vérité," Paris, Fasquelle, 18mo, 749 pages. Presentation copies and those of the first thousand with a mourning border on their covers.

[3] It is certain that the fortune left by Zola was of very moderate amount, for he had never hoarded money. Besides the large sums he had expended in connection with the Dreyfus case, he had for many years discharged a number of family obligations with respect to relatives in modest circumstances both in Italy and France. He was also the providence of the poorer peasantry around Médan, and the number of struggling young writers whom he helped with his purse was large.

---

[1] Mr. Young has acquired some scores of letters written by Zola, notably several bearing on his attempts to gain admission to the French Academy.

It remains to be added here that on May 26, 1903, in the presence of a few relatives and friends, Zola's remains were quietly translated from their provisional resting-place to a tomb — designed by M. Frantz-Jourdain — facing the *rond-point* or open space near the entrance of the Montmartre cemetery. There they will probably remain until the French nation decrees their removal to the Pantheon.

XV

CONCLUSION

THE INFLUENCE AND SURVIVAL OF ZOLA'S WORKS

The tragic elements in Zola's life — His place in history — Consequences of his action in the Dreyfus case — Survival of his novels — His influence on other writers — Social influence of some of his books — Zola's apostolic fervour — His prophetic instinct — "Germinal," "Travail," "Paris," and the French masses — Zola's unwritten book "Justice" — Result of his denunciations of vice — Immorality in Paris — Drunkenness in France — Why Zola should be remembered.

Such was the life, such also the death, of the greatest fighter that France produced in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The foregoing narrative, whatever may be its imperfections, will at least have given the reader some idea of that strenuous career which from youth onward was one long battle, an incessant expenditure of will, energy, and talent. It was also, like a battle, a resounding career, most of whose phases echoed all around. In the time of Alexandre Dumas *père* it used to be said, "When Dumas sneezes, all Paris starts"; and the same might have been subsequently said of Zola, some of whose "sneezes," indeed, reverberated far beyond Paris or even France. Looking at his life from another standpoint it will be found akin to a tragedy in several respects, — not the kind of tragedy which suggests thoughts of blood, thunder, and thrilling horrors, but one of hidden suffering and unrealised aspirations. That may be regarded perhaps as a petty, commonplace sort of tragedy, such as is enacted here and there every day, and left unrecorded. In Zola's case we see aspirations, efforts, struggles, disappointments, domestic trouble, misrepresentation, insult, and hatred, ending in death by accident, with just a few years of popularity and wealth thrown in to deepen, by force of contrast, the shadows of the rest. Even if we regard Zola's tragedy as that of a man's fight for the benefit of his fellowmen against those men themselves — and such it largely was — most of its features will be found to be of a familiar kind. One often perceives heroes and heroines, enthusiastic workers, fighters, and thinkers, who think not like the herd, who strive solely for that which they themselves deem to be right. Few achieve their purpose; the majority fail, disappear, die — as often as not — broken-hearted. Yet with a new generation others always arise to renew the combat. Now and again one of these enthusiasts secures a modicum of success, attains perhaps a hundredth part of his ambition, effects a hundredth part of the good he has dreamt of, leaves among many suggestions a single useful one behind him. But though the success of each individual worker may be very slight, that which he accomplishes is not lost; joined to what is accomplished by other workers, it enlarges the sum of progress. Each additional grain of wheat means an increase of the harvest, and of those who bring that grain to the store it may be said that even if they have failed in nine tenths of their efforts their failure is only relative.

In Zola's career, as in the careers of most men, there was both failure and success. Near as he still is to us, it is difficult to tell how far his measure of success will be permanent, how far his work and memory will survive him. We believe that by his action in the Dreyfus case he carved for himself an imperishable niche in the history of his country. Assuredly no historian, whatever his school, whatever his opinions, will be able to omit Zola's name from any record of the Third French Republic, for, as M. Anatole France said at his graveside, the consequences of Zola's action in the Affair have been immense. Far-reaching changes in the internal policy of France have proceeded from his deed, which led to a disclosure of the real sentiments of those Clericalists and Militarists who were closing in upon the Republic to destroy it. For a time the issue seemed doubtful; but the policy of Republican defence was inaugurated by M. Waldeck-Rousseau and has proceeded and expanded under his successor, M. Combes. To Zola and his letter "J'Accuse," and to the letter's various consequences, many of the events which have occurred in France since 1898 may be easily traced, even by those who know nothing of the novelist's political friendships, of his private intercourse with statesmen who during the Dreyfus turmoil lacked either the opportunity or the energy to intervene, and who, while privately assuring Zola of their sympathy, their conviction even that he was right, repeated to him: "Unfortunately I am not in office and I am therefore powerless. Besides, though I see the danger which you point out, it is very difficult to deal with. One must act with extreme prudence, for the patriotism of the electorate is aroused, and the Republic might be wrecked by precipitate action." Subsequently, after the death of Félix Faure, who was too deeply committed to the military party to take any honest, impartial action, some of the men who had held such language as one has indicated came to the front again, and then, as they gradually took confidence, things slowly changed. When the secret history of the Dreyfus affair from the political standpoint comes to be written, there will doubtless be more than one curious disclosure in which Zola will figure.

We take it, then, that he is assured of a niche in French history. The question of the ultimate survival of his novels is more difficult to determine. He himself declared on one occasion, in a public speech, that it was great honour for a literary man if he were only for one moment the spokesman of his generation and were even fated to oblivion afterward. Of course he, like other writers, aspired to some future fame. At any rate, even as he will figure in national history in connection with the Affair, so must his novels figure — and figure prominently, we think — in literary history. Can one imagine any record of the literary movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century containing no mention of Zola's writings? Independently of the writings themselves account has to be taken of their influence on other authors, not merely in France, but virtually all the world over. Zola always disclaimed any intention of founding a literary school. He protested repeatedly against such a suggestion. He had imitators certainly; all prominent writers have. But apart from those who deliberately set themselves to copy his methods, there were others, more independent, who in one or another respect yielded to his influence. Something of the Naturalism of the Rougon-Macquart series at least found its way into the English novel, in which also there came a reflection of Zola's later manner. Mr. George Moore may deny that he sprang from Zola, and may claim direct descent, as Zola did, from Flaubert and others. But in any case the principles on which Mr. Moore has often worked have been the same as those which Zola adopted. Nearer to Zola in some respects was the late Mr. George Gissing, who in others suggested Maupassant. The late Mr. Frank Norris, the American novelist, was manifestly influenced by Zola's later works; and it seems at least likely that various books by Mr. Hall Caine and Miss Marie Corelli would never have been written if Zola had not raised certain problems in such volumes as "Lourdes" and "Rome." Of Mr. Thomas Hardy it may be said perhaps, as of Mr. George Moore, that he has at least occasionally worked on lines running parallel to those on which Zola worked for years. It would be possible also to enumerate a large number of instances in which Zola's liberating influence has clearly appeared, even when his actual methods have not been followed. One may claim for him that he contributed largely and powerfully to free the modern novel from many shackles, with a result which is conspicuous on all sides. That nothing but Naturalism should remain in fiction as the result of his theories and efforts, was of course out of the question. Zola himself admitted that he had been a mere sectarian when in a dogmatic moment he had once suggested it. But certainly he helped to sweep away many conventionalities, and encourage an accurate presentment of life. Fiction, or at least that branch of it which claims to portray real life, is no longer the same as it was before he arose, and it seems hardly likely that it will ever revert to its former state.

With respect to the actual survival of his books as current literature, that, we think, will depend almost as much on circumstances as on their merits. They are not light reading. He himself was well aware of it, and, as we know, he said of himself, the Goncourts, and others, that future generations might well find their works difficult to read. Many already find it difficult to read Balzac, though he possessed a gift of humour which was lacking in Zola. On the other hand, Zola's style was generally much superior to Balzac's, though the latter was a good grammarian and could write admirable straightforward French when he pleased, as witness many letters in his "Correspondence." In the case both of Balzac and of Zola some knowledge of French history, politics, manners, and other matters is necessary for a proper understanding of their works. "Les Rougon-Macquart," like "La Comédie Humaine," can only be fully appreciated by those who are familiar with the period it treats of; and though Zola usually confined himself to the elemental passions which are also the eternal ones, it is perhaps doubtful whether works of fiction which tax the reader's knowledge in many ways can hope for immortality. Yet possibly the Rougon-Macquart series has a better chance of survival than is possessed by some of Zola's other books, whose social influence has been greater. Influence of that kind has certainly been exercised by some of the Rougon-Macquart volumes, though not in the same degree as by such great *machines de guerre* as "Lourdes" and "Rome," which reinforced by "Vérité" have proved factors of weight in the great struggle between clericalism and free thought in France. As engines of warfare for use in that struggle, they may survive for many years; but the struggle ceasing they would probably be soon forgotten, as is usually the case with books whose purpose is too ostensible. That example will explain the meaning of our remark that the survival of many of Zola's works will depend on circumstances. In the final triumph of the principles which his last and unfinished series enunciated, we feel considerable confidence. We believe, as Zola did, that the whole world is tending slowly but surely to better things, that we shall come at last to a more natural and more upright life, that increase of knowledge will bring increase of truth, increase of equity, and that the day will come when science will at last confound all superstitions.

One of the men for whom the novelist in his latest years testified the most respect was M. Berthelot, the eminent scientist, long the friend of Renan. It says much for M. Berthelot that he should have exercised considerable influence on two such men, but it should be remembered that if they differed in many ways they also had their points of contact. Though Zola was no priest, whereas Renan remained one in some essential respects until the end, he had in him an apostolic fervour which many a priest might have envied. Even in the days of the Rougon-Macquart novels, which were so impersonal, that fervour displayed itself freely in all Zola's miscellaneous papers, his literary, theatrical, and art criticisms. And it is somewhat remarkable that with this strong fervour within him he should so long have contrived to check and subdue it directly he turned from an essay to a novel. When he ceased to do so and allowed it to invade his novels, the cry of "a new Zola!" arose among those whose knowledge of his writings was confined to his earlier fiction.

Besides his apostolic fervour, Zola, like Renan, possessed a kind of prophetic instinct, which proceeded from the exercise to which he constantly subjected his brain. Every time when in preparing a new novel he had assembled a number of facts, he proceeded to draw deductions from them, to weigh all probabilities and possibilities; and his mind being thus trained, dealt in the same way with all the current events in which he took interest. During his year's stay in England at the time of the Dreyfus case he repeatedly told the writer that he felt sure so-and-so would happen, and in nine cases out of ten his predictions were accurate. At times when the writer went to him with a preconceived opinion or some forecast taken from a newspaper it was particularly interesting to hear him analyse it, examine it under every aspect, and confirm or refute it in accordance with his view of the probabilities. On such occasions his systematical and logical mind was fully revealed; and one may say that the prescience which he often displayed was far more a matter of knowledge and logic than of inspiration. The latter undoubtedly came to his aid on some notable occasions, but even when he so fervently declared his belief in the innocence of Captain Dreyfus — at a time when all positive proof thereof seemed lacking — he at least had some logical basis for his belief which his expertness in deduction had intensified.[1]

It has been pointed out that several of Zola's later books influenced the community, or at least a large section of it, in connection notably with the struggle between Church and State in France. "Germinal" and "Travail," which circulated widely among the working classes, must also have exercised considerable influence. Of recent years the latter work has frequently furnished subjects for lectures delivered to working-class audiences in the French provinces as well as in Paris; and although, as was remarked in a previous chapter, "Travail" may not be in some respects a very practical work, its pacific tendencies are admirable, and the worker who comes under their influence can but reject the more violent courses which some leaders of advanced opinions have preached. Again, "Paris," which is not held to be one of Zola's greatest books, has met with no little favour among the masses, less because it paints the corruption existing in some spheres of society than because it gives voice to the chief demand of the masses, which is for justice. It does not treat the subject fully, being more concerned with the failure of charity to cope with the necessities of the modern world, but it indicates that justice should take charity's place, and this accords so well with the feeling of the multitude that the favour accorded to the book is but natural.

---

[1] As the result of constant exercise, his mind often worked with great rapidity in these matters, the various aspects of a case and its possibilities coming to him almost in a flash.

If Zola had lived another year he would have dealt exhaustively with that subject of social justice, — equity between class and class, man and man. It was to have been treated in the last volume of his "Évangiles." Only two days before his death, on the eve of his return from Médan to Paris, he wrote to his publisher, M. Fasquelle, that on the following Monday morning he should begin to prepare that concluding work. He was unable to do so, for on the morning stated he died; and foul-minded bigots, on hearing of his intention, repeated with a sneer, "He was going to begin 'Justice' — well, justice has been done to him." But whatever vileness may have come from men who ever had the words "We are Christians" on the tip of their tongues or at the point of their pens, all those who are in any degree oppressed may well regret that the hand of death robbed them of a powerful statement of their rights.[1]

It would not appear that the flagellation of vice which one finds in the Rougon-Macquart novels has had any widespread effect in France, though it has undoubtedly done good in individual cases. From the general standpoint Paris shows little sign of improvement in some matters. The number of illegitimate births and the number of divorce cases remain extremely large. It may be said, however, that these point less to absolute immorality than to new conceptions of marriage and discontent with existing laws. With respect to the illegitimate births one finds the fathers of the children constantly recognising their paternity in the official declarations of birth, and thereby making themselves responsible for the upbringing of the little ones. The fact is that cohabitation without marriage seems to increase, while there is a falling off both in the number of marriages and in the cases of desertion following seduction.

As regards "L'Assommoir," respecting which the writer has often cordially re-echoed the opinion that it is one of the greatest temperance tracts ever written, one can only say that, like other books of Zola's, it has done good in individual instances, but has failed to stem the general passion for strong drink. The sobriety of the French nation was at one time almost proverbial, but there has been a great change in that matter since the War of 1870. The efforts of various kinds made to check the consumption of alcohol in Paris itself have in a measure proved successful, the average having been reduced during recent years from nine to seven quarts per annum per head of the population. But Normandy tells a terrible tale: At Caen the consumption is fifteen quarts per head, at Rouen it is over sixteen, at Havre it is seventeen, and at Cherbourg, eighteen. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the depopulation of Normandy is proceeding apace, that the women, who are as much addicted to drink as the men, can seldom bear children, and that even when they become mothers they are unable to suckle their babes. Thus one of the sturdiest races of France is perishing, destroyed by cider and potato spirit. The very children often drink on their way to school, insanity flourishes, and immorality is widespread.[1]

---

[1] Zola left behind him the libretto of a *drame lyrique*, "L'Enfant Roi," which M. Bruneau has since set to music, and which is to be performed at the Opéra Comique in Paris.

But reforms are not accomplished in a day; and in many instances authors may write in vain, even as the clergy may preach, if legislation does not come to their aid. In some matters even legislation is futile, and then reform can only come gradually, as the result of example and knowledge. To improve the nation you must usually begin by improving the individual. If, then, Zola succeeded in his aims in individual cases — and the writer holds strongly that he did — he effected all that he could reasonably hope for. He did not stamp out vice in France. Neither has the State done so, nor has the Church, nor has any other powerful and wealthy organisation. Zola had only his brain and his pen, and with those weapons he did his best, according to his lights. He was all sincerity; hypocrisy was the thing he most detested. He fought the good fight. After setting forth the evil that was, he preached the cleanly and the fruitful life, brotherliness, equity, rectitude, and truthfulness. He desired the suppression of all noxious agents, and it was because he regarded the Roman Church as such that he assailed it so fiercely. Moreover, he did not share the delusion which imagines a heaven beyond the skies; he wished to set a heaven in this our planet. That was his ideal. He did not believe in resignation. He placed his faith in work and effort. He loved his Mother Earth, he pictured her beauties. He loved his fellowmen; in his harshest moments he sought their good only. The one error of his life showed how human he was. If he were ambitious it was that he might advocate the principles in which he believed, with more and more authority. In a dim and dolorous hour,

---

[1] In the autumn of 1902 the writer was a guest at one of the monthly dinners of the French Society of Anthropology. Several members had lately returned from Normandy where they had been making exhaustive inquiries into the subject referred to above. The consensus of opinion was that the drink curse had caused greater ravages in Normandy than in any other part of Europe.

> "when God himself seemed dumb
> And all his arching skies were in eclipse,"

this abused and insulted novelist turned from his work and smote for truth and justice. Others shall decide whether he was a man of genius; suffice it for us that, all his life, he was a man of bravery. He feared none. If there was tragedy in his career, he knew how to bear it. He felt, he prophesied, the day would come when justice would be done to him. That day is hastening; and in whatever estimation his writings may be held hereafter, whether some survive, whether all sink into oblivion, his memory will assuredly abide for many generations, for the world does not willingly forget those who teach it courage, — the first, the foremost quality that life demands of man.

APPENDIX

A

DECLARATION OF THE BIRTH OF ÉMILE ZOLA

The year 1840, this fourth day of April, at a quarter past two o'clock in the afternoon, before us, Barthélemy Benoist Decau, knight of the Legion of Honour, Mayor of the Third Arrondissement of Paris, discharging the functions of registrar of births, deaths, and marriages, there has appeared the Sieur François Antoine Joseph Marie Zola, civil engineer, forty-four years of age, residing in Paris at No. 10 *bis* Rue St. Joseph, who has presented to us a child of the male sex, born the day before yesterday, at eleven o'clock in the evening, at the appearer's residence, being the son of the said appearer and of Françoise Émilie Aubert, his wife, married in Paris at the municipal offices of the First Arrondissement, on March 16, 1839; to which said child the appearer has given the forenames of Émile Édouard Charles Antoine. Entered in the presence of Norbert Lecerf, grocer, age fifty-two years, residing in Paris, at No. 18 Rue St. Joseph, and of Louis Étienne Auguste Aubert, of independent means, age fifty-six years, residing in Paris at No. 106 Rue de Cléry, maternal grandfather of the said child. And after perusal of the present the father and the witnesses have signed, ZOLA, LECERF, AUBERT, DECAU, mayor.

B

DECLARATION OF THE DEATH OF ZOLA

The year 1902, this thirtieth day of September, before us, Mayor of the Ninth Arrondissement of Paris, declaration has been made of the death of Monsieur Émile Zola, officer of the Legion of Honour, *homme de lettres*, who died the twenty-ninth September in Paris, at his residence, situated No. 21 *bis* Rue de Bruxelles, at the age of sixty-two years. Son of the deceased François Zola, engineer, and of the deceased Émilie Aubert. Husband of Madame Alexandrine Gabrielle Zola, *née* Meley. In testimony of which the declaring witnesses have signed with us, LABORI, M. DUTARD, ——, mayor.

C

NOTE ON SOME ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF ZOLA'S NOVELS

Some information respecting the first editions, etc., of Zola's writings has been given in a number of footnotes in the course of the present volume. That information is by no means exhaustive, but pending the appearance of a complete bibliography, which will surely be undertaken before long, it may be acceptable to various readers and book-collectors. For the convenience of those who are unacquainted with French, the author here appends a list of the translations in the English language which are known to him. Unfortunately he has no acquaintance with the great majority of those issued in America. Should the present volume be reprinted, and information concerning American translations be supplied to him through his publisher, he will endeavour to include it in a future edition. He may mention now that he believes several translations of merit have been made in the United States by Mr. Benjamin R. Tucker.

With respect to the English translations those published by Vizetelly & Co. between 1884 and 1889 were the following: "The Fortune of the Rougons," "The Rush for the Spoil" ("La Curée"), "A Love Episode" ("Une Page d'Amour"), "Fat and Thin" ("Ventre de Paris"), "The Conquest of Plassans," "Abbé Mouret's Transgression," "His Excellency

E. Rougon," "The Assommoir," "Nana," "Piping-Hot" ("Pot-Bouille"), "The Ladies' Paradise" ("Au Bonheur des Dames"), "How Jolly Life is!" ("La Joie de Vivre"), "Germinal," "His Masterpiece" ("L'Œuvre"), "The Soil" ("La Terre"), "Madeleine Férat," "Thérèse Raquin," and "A Soldier's Honour" (short stories). All the above were issued in crown octavo form. There were also large octavo editions of "Nana," "The Assommoir," and "Piping-Hot," each with about one hundred illustrations. The smaller volumes also contained illustrations or frontispieces. After the first proceedings at law against the publishers, most of the above translations were re-expurgated and re-issued. The re-issues were distinguished from the earlier editions by the words "A new Edition," and by the heading "The Rougon-Macquart Family," I, II, III, etc., which heading does not appear on the title-pages of the first and fuller editions. There was, however, no such re-issue of "Nana," "Piping-Hot," and "The Soil." In some early catalogues "Claude's Confession" was announced by the firm, but the writer does not find that it was ever published. The above translations are all out of print, with the exception of "The Soil," which is sold *in France only* by the proprietor of the copyright of that translation (Paris, Flammarion). In consequence of the conviction of Henry Vizetelly it may not be sold in the British dominions.

The English translations now in circulation in Great Britain are enumerated below. Here and there in the list the writer has mentioned some American editions known to him. In the case of the Rougon-Macquart series the order in which the volumes are placed is that in which they should be read.

Rougon-Macquart Series.

I. "The Fortune of the Rougons," edited with an introduction by Ernest A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto and Windus, St. Martin's Lane.

II. "His Excellency" ("Son Exc. E. Rougon"), edited, etc., by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto. The same, published in New York by the Macmillan Co.

"La Curée" should follow here, but there is no English version on sale.

III. "Money" ("L'Argent"), translated by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto.

IV. "The Dream" ("Le Rêve"), translated by Eliza E. Chase. Eight illustrations. London, Chatto.

V. "The Conquest of Plassans," edited, etc., by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto.

"Pot-Bouille" should follow here, but no English version is in circulation.

VI. "The Ladies' Paradise" ("Au Bonheur des Dames"), edited, etc., by E. A. Vizetelly. Frontispiece. London, Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster Row.

VII. "Abbé Mouret's Transgression," edited, etc., by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto.

VIII. "A Love Episode" ("Une Page d'Amour"), translated by E. A. Vizetelly. Ninety-four illustrations. London, Hutchinson.

IX. "The Fat and the Thin" ("Le Ventre de Paris"), translated by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto.

X. "The Joy of Life," edited, etc., by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto.

XI. "The Dram Shop" ("L'Assommoir"), edited, etc., by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto.

XII. "His Masterpiece" ("L'Œuvre"), edited, etc., by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto.

XIII. "The Monomaniac" ("La Bête Humaine"), translated by Edward Vizetelly (see *ante*, p. 248, footnote). London, Hutchinson.

XIV. "Germinal," edited by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto.

"Nana" should follow here, but no English version of the slightest value is in circulation, though of this and a few other volumes there are some paltry adaptations, which omit from a third to half of those works as they stand in the original French.

After "Nana" should come "La Terre," no English version of which is sold in Great Britain.

XV. "The Downfall" ("La Débâcle"), translated by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto.

An American translation, under the same title, by E. P. Robins, was published by the Cassell Co., New York, 1893. The Macmillan Co. also catalogues a translation, perhaps the same.

XVI. "Doctor Pascal," translated by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto.

An American translation by Mary J. Serrano is published by the Macmillan Co., New York.

The "TROIS VILLES" series: I, "Lourdes," II, "Rome," and III, "Paris," as translated by Ernest A. Vizetelly, is published in London by Chatto and Windus, in New York by the Macmillan Co.

Of Zola's last series, "LES QUATRE ÉVANGILES," only three volumes were issued, the translations being as follows:

I. "Fruitfulness" ("Fécondité"), translated by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto; New York, Doubleday.

II. "Work" ("Travail"), translated by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto.

An American translation called "Labor" is issued by Messrs. Harper, New York.

III. "Truth" ("Vérité"), translated by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto; New York, John Lane.

There are also the following translations of Zola's miscellaneous novels and short stories: —

I. "Thérèse Raquin," translated by Edward Vizetelly, London, Grant Richards.

II. "A Dead Woman's Wish" ("Le Vœu d'une Morte"), translated by Count C. S. de Soissons. London, Greening.

III. "The Mysteries of Marseilles," translated by Edward Vizetelly. London, Hutchinson.

IV. "The Honour of the Army and other Stories" ("Le Capitaine Burle," "Naïs Micoulin," "Nantas," etc.), edited by E. A. Vizetelly. London, Chatto. This volume is not identical with the one called "A Soldier's Honour," formerly published by Vizetelly & Co., some of the tales contained in the latter having been omitted, and others added.

V. "Stories for Ninon" ("Contes à Ninon" and "Nouveaux Contes à Ninon"), translated by Edward Vizetelly. 2 vols. London, Heinemann.

VI. "The Attack on the Mill," etc. London, Heinemann.

One may also mention Zola's "Letters to France" (Dreyfus case), introduction by L. F. Austin. London and New York, John Lane.

INDEX

About, Edmond, 67, 87, 98, 172, 173, 185, 249
Academy, French, 216, 218, 306 *et seq.*, 336
Adam, Mme. Edmond, 189
Addlestone, Zola at, 469, 470, 477
Aix in Provence, Zola Canal at, 15, 25, 26, 29, 40, 41; funeral of F. Zola at, 27, 28; his widow's troubles at, 29, 32 *et seq.*; is the Plassans of the Rougon-Macquarts, 30, 115; history and celebrities of, 30, 31; Zola's homes at, 32, 33, 34, 46; college of, 32, 35 *et seq.*, 46; King René's "chimney" at, 39; environs of, 40 *et seq.*; Zola's holidays at, 49, 51; referred to, 350, 351, 409
Alexis, Paul, 37, 63, 146, 147, 158, 162, 191, 367, 371
Algeria, F. Zola in, 8 *et seq.*; anti-Semitic riots in, 446
Allen, Grant, 298
Allier, Raoul, 447
American Literature in 1840, 19
Amicis, E. de, 371
Amnesty Bill in Dreyfus Case, 487 *et seq.*
André, General, 488, 513
Angina, Zola's, 393, 475, 510
Animals, Zola's love of, 398, 401, 475 *et seq.*
Anonymity in Journalism, Zola on, 327, 330, 331
Anti-Semitism in France, 417 *et seq.*, 431, 442, 445, 446, 450, 459
Arc, river, 40, 42
Archer, William, 298
Arithmomania, Zola's, 392, 504
Army, French, anti-Semitism in the, 427 *et seq.* *See also* Staff, Militarism, etc.
Asquith, H. H., Q. C., 268, 269, 277
Athenæum Club, 332
Aubert, Françoise Émilie, *see* Zola, F. E.
—— Louis Etienne, grandfather of E. Zola, 16, 29, 32, 46, 47, 69, 541
—— Mme., grandmother of E. Zola, 18, 29, 32, 33, 34, 46
Aubryet, Xavier, 89
Audiffret-Pasquier, Duke d', 307
Augier, Émile, 86, 112, 185, 202
Austria, F. Zola in, 7, 8
Authors' Club, the, 328, 329, 332, 333
Avory, H., 270

Baille, J. B., 38, 39, 48, 49, 70, 97, 100
Ballet, Zola and the, 430
Balzac, Honoré de, 21, 105, 106, 108, 111, 121, 190, 306, 384, 389, 395, 532
Banville, T. de, 59
Bar, French, traditions of the, 449, 450
Barbey d'Aurévilly, 77, 190
Bardoux, Agenor, 174 *et seq.*, 239
Barrière, Théodore, 112, 202
Baudelaire, 86
Baudry, 185
Beauce, La, 16, 219, 229, 230, 232
Beauchamp, Zola calls himself, 470 *et seq.*
Beauharnais, Eugène de, 6
Becque, Henri, 388
Béhard, E., 91, 147
Bellanger, Marguerite, 186
Belleville and Gambetta, 198
Belot, Adolphe, 102
Bennecourt, Zola at, 96, 97
Benodet, Anse de, 218
Bergerat, M., 146
Berman, Dr., 508
Bernabei, Signor, 411
Bernadotte, 428
Bernard, Claude, 183, 311
Berryer, 449
Berthelot, M., 447, 533
Berton, Mme., 170
Besant, Sir W., 298, 328
Betham-Edwards, Miss, 381
Billot, General, 9, 435, 440 *et seq.*, 444, 447, 462
Birth of É. Zola, 18, 541
Bogue, David, 247
Boileau, 374
Boisdeffre, General de, 440, 444, 451
Boissier, Gaston, 414
Bonaparte, Princess Mathilde, 75, 119. *See also* Napoleon
Bonnetain, Paul, 234 *et seq.*
Bontoux, financier, 421
Bordeaux, Zola at, 127 *et seq.*, 131; riots at, 446
Bordereau, the, 433
Borinage, the, 220
Bornier, Henri de, 310
Borthwick, Sir A. (Lord Glenesk), 297
Bouchor, M., 146
Boudet, Dr., 64
Bouffar, Zulma, 186

Boulancy, Mme. de, 437
Boulanger, General, 233, 234, 421, 422
"Boule de Suif," 192
Bourdilliat, M., 88, 90
Bourget, Paul, 262, 286, 385
"Bovary, Madame," 22, 72, 78, 111, 123, 146, 147, 163, 262, 286
Bow Street Police Court, H. Vizetelly at, 268, 286
Boycott of Paris Exhibition, 485
"Boy's Own Book," the, 245
Bradlaugh, C., 298
Bréal, M., 447
Brescia, 2, 35; Zola at, 412
Brett, G., 477
Bridge, Sir John, 268
Brieux, M., 389
Brisson, Henri, 462 *et seq.*, 476, 477
British Museum, Zola at the, 334, 335
Broglie, Duke de, 307
Brough, R. B., 247
Browning, Oscar, 298
Bruneau, Alfred, 191, 304, 388, 407, 430, 454, 498, 515
Brunetière, F., 103, 310, 323
Buchanan, Robert, 297, 298, 313, 314, 340
Buckingham Palace, Zola's view of, 336
Bulow, Count von, 448
Burnett, Mrs. F. H., 298
Burnham, Lord, *see* Lawson
Burty, Philippe, 146
Busnach, William, 177, 201, 202, 219, 226, 233, 288

CABANEL, M., 185
Caine, Hall, 298, 531
Caird, Mrs. Mona, 298
Cameron, Dr. C., M. P., 297
Carnot, President, 238
"Carroll, Lewis," 345
Castagnary, 124
Castellane, Count B. de, 513
Castel-Sarrazin, Zola and, 128 *et seq.*
Castiglione, Countess de, 186, 351
Cavaignac, Godefroy, 448, 462 *et seq.*, 474
Cavalié, G., 127, 128
Céard, Henri, 146, 162, 191, 207, 233, 415
Censorship, theatrical, 201, 226, 303
Central Criminal Court, H. Vizetelly at the, 269, 274 *et seq.*, 291 *et seq.*
Cerise, Dr., 89
Cézanne, Paul, 38, 39, 48, 49, 55, 70, 91, 92, 96, 97
Chabrillat, Henri, 178, 203
Chamberlain, J., M. P., 277
Chamber of Deputies, Dreyfus case in the, 434, 445, 448, 463
Chambers, Sir T., Recorder, 276, 280, 281, 294
Chanoine, General, 474
Characteristics, personal, of Zola, 391 *et seq.*
Charonne, Gambetta at, 197 *et seq.*
Charpentier, Alexandre, 490
—— George, publisher, 98, 135 *et seq.*, 146, 148, 154, 156, 194, 209, 302, 321, 368, 465, 469, 509, 515
—— Gustave, composer, 389
Chateaubriand, F. R. de, 20, 145, 146, 374, 404
Chateaudun, Zola at, 232
Chatto, Andrew, 316, 334, 460, 477, 478
Chatto and Windus, 284, 316
Chaumié, M., 384, 516
Cheeses, Zola's symphony of, 142, 143
Cherbuliez, V., 161, 172, 249
Children, Zola's, 400 *et seq.*
Chopin, 404
Cladel, Léon, 161, 172, 173
Claretie, Jules, 160, 161, 172, 173, 174, 311
Clarke, Sir E., Q. C., 277 *et seq.*, 291 *et seq.*
—— H. Savile, 298
Clay, Henry, 403
Clemenceau, G., 447, 458, 465, 466
Cluer, A. R., 275, 288, 289, 291, 292
Cock, Mr. Q. C., 289, 291 *et seq.*
Cockburn, Ld. Ch. Justice, 277
Coffin, Dr. R. M., 298
Collins, Mabel, 298
Combe, Colonel, 11
Combes, M., Prime Minister, 512
"Comic Almanack, Cruikshank's," 245
Commons, House of, debate on Zola's novels, etc., 262 *et seq.*
Compiègne, imperial court at, 151, 152
Comte, A., 395
"Confession," Zola's, 398
Coppée, F., 50, 116, 146, 309
Corelli, Marie, 531
Corfu, 5
Corot, 95
Coste, Numa, 97, 147
Cotton, J. S., 298
Couesdon, Mlle., 417
Courbet, 94
Cour de Cassation and Zola, 461, 463; and Revision of Dreyfus case, 476, 479, 480
Crawfurd, O., C. M. G., 328, 332

DANCING, Zola and, 430
Dantan, E., 170
Daubigny, 95
Daudet, Alphonse, 22, 23, 50, 59, 77, 87, 88, 135, 141, 144 *et seq.*, 147, 153, 161, 174 *et seq.*, 194, 209, 216 *et seq.*, 226, 234, 236, 237, 249, 320, 321, 420, 434, 435
—— Ernest, 102
Death, Zola and, 195, 210, 211, 218, 392, 398, 504, 505, 541
"Decameron, the," 253, 269
Defaut, Dr., 509
Degas, 91
Delegorgue, Judge, 451
Delthil, Camille, 128 *et seq.*
Denise, 402
Déroulède, Paul, 427, 479
Desart, Earl of, 298
Descaves, Lucien, 234, 235
Deschamps, Gaston, 414
Desmoulin, Fernand, 191, 454, 466, 468, 469, 471, 509, 515
Dhur, Jacques, 9 *et seq.*
Dickens, C., 493
Dierx, M., 161
Dinners of the Hissed Authors, 144, 145, 209, 210, 368

Dircks, W. H., 298
Docks Napoleon, Zola at the, 53, 54
Dode, General, 24
Dogs, Zola's, 123, 401, 475, 476, 507, 509
Donnersmarck, Henckel von, 185
Dourdan, 15, 230
"Downfall, The," *see* "La Débâcle," under heading "Zola's Works"
Dream of Colonel Henry's death, 472, 473
Dréolle, Ernest, 120
Dreyfus Affair, generally, 116, 419 *et seq.*, 428, 433, 440
—— Captain Alfred, 410, 412, 413, 417, 429, 431, 433, 436, 440, 444, 448, 458, 466, 480, 481, 484, 485 *et seq.*, 513, 514, 522
—— Mme., 431
—— Mathieu, 431, 433, 436
Drouet, Mme., 404
Droz, Gustave, 87
Drumont, Édouard, 423, 461, 511
Dubufe, E., 95
Ducamp, Maxime, 146
Duclaux, M., 447
Du Lac, Father, 444
Dumas, Alexandre, the elder, 22, 85, 89, 306, 374, 376, 404, 410, 527
—— —— the younger, 50, 89, 112, 173, 174, 202, 204, 306, 404
Du Maurier, George, 297
Dupanloup, Bishop, 86, 307
Du Paty de Clam, Colonel, 433, 439, 440, 443, 458
Dupuy, M., Prime Minister, 477, 484
Duranty, 67, 116, 147
Duret, Théodore, 91, 477, 515
Dusautoy, M., 120
Duvernois, Camille, 120

Edwards, H. Sutherland, 247, 298
Eliot, George, 404
Ellis, Havelock, 298
Emerson, 404
Empire, the Second French, foundation of, 34; law of public safety, 47; Quartier Latin during, 59; opposition to, 75; tyranny and corruption of, 84, 85, 186; its waning prestige, 97; whether Zola would have sold himself to, 115 *et seq.*; journalists bribed by, 120; fall of, 125, 126; court of, 151, 152, 186; its treatment of the peasantry, 230; its "Robert Macaires," 350; its characteristics shown in the Rougon-Macquart series, 351 *et seq.*
England, rural districts of, 279, 339; Zola's first stay in, 329 *et seq.*; his second stay, 465 to 480
English Literature in 1840, 18
Erckmann-Chatrian, 87, 89, 112, 172
Esterhazy, *see* Walsin
Ewald, A. C., 298
Execution and sale at Zola's Paris house, 474 *et seq.*
Experts, handwriting, in Dreyfus case, 444, 448, 463, 475, 489
"Extracts from English Classics," Vizetelly's, 271 *et seq.*

Fabre, Ferdinand, 161, 172, 176
Fantin-Latour, 91
Fasquelle, Eugène, 305, 453, 476, 477, 480, 509, 515
"Fatalité," play by Quènemeur, 12
Faure, President Félix, 438, 439, 443, 463, 479, 529
Faux, W., 298
Favre, Jules, 449
Féder, financier, 421
Ferry, Jules, 368, 415
Feuillet, Octave, 87, 112, 161, 172, 173, 190
Féval, Paul, 172
Fischer and wife, 10 *et seq.*
Flamidien, Brother, 500
Flassans, 30
Flaubert, Gustave, 22, 72, 98, 105, 111, 119, 121, 140, 141, 144 *et seq.*, 152, 154, 161 *et seq.*, 167, 174 *et seq.*, 179, 190, 193, 194, 286, 367, 377, 435, 525
Fleury, Dr. M. de, 415
Forbes, Archibald, 298, 317
Fortifications, *see* Paris
Fortune, Zola's, 489, 490, 524
Foster, Birket, 247, 287, 298
France, Anatole, 143, 161, 447, 515, 518 *et seq.*
"France Juive, La," 422, 423
Franklin, Benjamin, 403
Frantz-Jourdain, 415, 526
Fratta, Signora, *see* Zola
French Literature in 1840, 20 *et seq.*; in 1865, 85 *et seq.*; in 1876-78, 161
Freycinet, C. de, 309
Frith, W. P., R. A., 298
Fromentin, 94
Fulton, Sir F., 269
Funeral of Zola, 514 *et seq.*
Furniss, Harry, 298
Furnivall, Dr. F. J., 298

Gaboriau, Émile, 87, 103
Gallet, L., 304, 407
Galliffet, General-Marquis de, 48, 488
—— Marquis de, 25
Gambetta, Léon, 127 *et seq.*, 196 *et seq.*, 215, 225, 368, 422, 450
Garnett, Dr. R., 298, 334
Gastineau, B., 177
Gaucher, M., 160
Gautier, Théophile, 21, 89, 134, 135, 152, 185, 262
Geddes, Prof., 298
General Staff, French, *see* Staff
Genoa, Zola at, 318
"Germinie Lacerteux," 75, 109, 123
Gérôme, 95, 185
Gerstner, Ritter von, 7, 8
Gilbert, Sir John, 287, 297
Girardin, Émile de, 75, 83, 120, 144, 185
Giry, M., 447
Gissing, George, 531
Glais-Bizoin, 119, 127, 128, 368
Gmunden, 8
Goblet, René, 226
Gomme, G. L., 298
Goncourt Academy, 320
—— Brothers, 75, 76, 79, 89, 90, 109 *et seq.*, 119, 378

Goncourt, Edmond de, 75, 111, 115 *et seq.*, 120, 121, 140, 141, 144 *et seq.*, 152 *et seq.*, 161, 167, 176, 185, 190, 194, 195, 201, 209 *et seq.*, 216, 219, 220, 224 *et seq.*, 236, 237, 262, 302, 320, 377, 378, 401, 435
—— Jules de, 75, 109, 111, 378
Gonse, General, 440, 444
Gosse, Edmund, 277, 298
Gounod, C., 48
Grandcamp, Zola at, 207, 218
Greenwood, Frederick, 247, 298
—— James, 247, 298
Grégoire, Abbé, 420
Grenier, Edouard, 101
Greenville-Murray, E. C., 249
Grévy, President, 225, 234
Grimaux, M., 447
Grosvenor Hotel, Zola at, 466, 467
Grousset, Paschal, 127
Guiches, Gustave, 234, 235
Guildhall, Zola at, 332; police court, 269
Guillemet, M., 91
Guimond, Esther, 185
Guyot, Yves, 183, 184, 447, 477, 491

Hachette, Louis, 64, 69, 78; & Co., 64 *et seq.*, 77, 78
Haggard, H. Rider, 298
Halévy, Ludovic, 89, 185, 309, 515
Hamel, Ernest, 90
Hand, Zola's, and palmistry, 391, 392
Handwriting experts, *see* Experts
—— Zola's, 373, 374
Hannay, James, 247
Hanotaux, M., 452
Hardy, Thomas, 19, 298, 531
Harris, Sir Augustus, 298
—— Frank, 288, 298, 340
Hatton, Joseph, 329
Haussmann, 58, 125, 352
Havet, M., 447
Havin, L., 124
Hébert, M., 411
Hennique, Léon, 146, 160, 162, 191, 233
"Henriette Maréchal," Goncourt's play, 75, 76, 79, 128, 224
Henry, Major, later Colonel, 9, 433, 436, 451, 461, 463, 464, 473, 482
"Heptameron, The," 253, 286, 328
Hérédia, J. M. de, 209
Heredity, in Zola's writings, 113, 123, 351, 353, 359, 363, 364
Hermant, Abel, 515, 517
Herz, pianist, 185
Hollingshead, J., 247
Holloway jail, 295, 298
Homes, Zola's, at Aix, 32, 33, 34, 36; in Paris, 47, 54, 56, 61, 68, 69, 74, 96, 100, 132, 149, 150, 154, 168, 305, 474, 476, 505. *See also* Médan
House of Commons, *see* Commons
Houssaye, Arsène, 87, 103, 104, 185
Hugo, Victor, 21, 22, 43, 85, 108, 116 *et seq.*, 161, 196, 202, 216, 224 *et seq.*, 306, 373, 374, 395, 401, 404
—— Charles, 117; François, 117; George, 226; Léopoldine, 118
Huysmans, J. K., 146, 162, 163, 191, 207, 377

Ibsen, Dr., 389
"Index Expurgatorius Librorum Prohibitorum," 3, 409, 410
Industry of Zola, 322, 395, 396
Influence of Zola's writings, 530 *et seq.*
Ingram, Herbert, M. P., 246
Ingres, 216
Institute of Journalists and Zola, 323, 325 *et seq.*
Intellectuals, the, 447
Interviews, first, in European journalism, 82
Irving, Sir H., 287, 298
Iung, General, 321

Jacques, 402, 515
James, Henry, 243
Janin, Jules, 21, 98, 374
Japan, 2, 3
Jaurès, Jean, 447, 462, 477
Jay, Harriett, 298
Jeanniot, M., 191, 317
Jerrold, Douglas, 246
Jesuits, the, 423
Jews in France, *see* Anti-Semitism
Jones, H. A., 298
Judet, E., libels Zola's father, 9 *et seq.*, 461, 488, 489

Kean, Edmund, 246
Kensit, 257, 258
Kiariaki, *see* Zola, Benedetta
Kibblewhite, E. J., 316

Laborde, M. and Mme., relatives of Zola, 509, 515
Labori, Fernand, 432, 449 *et seq.*, 457 *et seq.*; 461, 465, 477, 484, 489, 491, 523
Labot, Maître, 27, 47
Labouchere, H., M. P., 296
Lacroix, Albert, 71, 76, 89, 90, 104, 107, 114, 115, 116, 125, 132, 134, 136, 137
Laffitte, Jules, 187, 195
—— Pierre, 503
La Fontaine, 17, 18, 50, 51
Lalance, M., 522
Lamennais, 404
Lang, Andrew, 103, 243
Larat, Dr., 515
Laurier, C., 127 *et seq.*
Lawley, Hon. F., 298
Lawson, Sir Edward, 330, 332
Lazare, Bernard, 431, 466
Lebaudy *père*, 421, 422
Leconte de Lisle, 86, 161
Le Fanu, G. B., 298
Legion of Honour and Zola, 173 *et seq.*, 238 *et seq.*, 269, 323, 461, 468, 513
Legouvé, E., 19
Lemaître, Frédérick, 21, 350
Lemercier-Picard, 451, 452
Lenormand, Dr., 509
Leo XIII, Pope, 409, 410, 411, 416, 424
Leroux, Pierre, 404
Leroy-Beaulieu, A., 447
Lespès, L. (T. Trimm), 82
L'Estaque, Zola at, 166
Levasseur, E., 48

Lever, C., 19
Levy, J. H., 477
Lévy, Michel, 73, 88
Librairie Internationale, 76, 89, 90, 91
—— Nouvelle, 88, 89
Library, sale of Zola's, 524, 525
Lickfold, Mr., 269, 294
Lincoln's Inn Hall, Zola at, 330
Linton, Mrs. Lynn, 298
Liszt, 404
Literature, *see* American, English, French
Littré, E., 66, 86, 307, 503
Lockroy, Édouard, 118, 238 *et seq.*
Loiseau, M., 515
Loisy, Abbé, 411
London, Zola in, 329 *et seq.*, 465, 466; Zola on poverty in, 335
Longfellow, 20, 247
Loti, P., 310
Loubet, President, 479, 486
Louis-Philippe, King, 8, 11, 20, 34
Lourdes, Zola at, 311, 318. *For his novel* "Lourdes" *see* Zola, Writings
Love, Zola, Flaubert, Goncourt, Tourgeneff and, 167
Lowell, J. R., 20
Lucas, Charles, 114; Dr. P., 114
Lucy, H. W., 298
Lyons, Lord, 127, 128
—— riots at, 446
Lytton, Lord ("Owen Meredith"), 298

Macaulay, 19
MacColl, Canon, 339
Maccoll, Norman, 298
MacMahon, Marshal, 156, 177
"Madame Bovary," *see* Bovary
Magnard, F., 329
"Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," Stead's, 256, 258, 272
Main, Dr., 509
Macaire and Makaire, 350
Mallarmé, S., 161
Malot, Hector, 161, 172
Manet, Édouard, 91, 93, 95, 101, 116, 179, 303
Manifesto of the Five ("La Terre"), 234 *et seq.*
Margueritte, Paul, 234, 235, 378; Victor, 235, 378
Marriage vow, violations of the, 401
Marryat, Captain, 19
Marseilles, F. Zola at, 13 *et seq.*, 27; É. Zola at, 52; canal to, 25; riots at, 446
Marshall, F. A., 298
Martineau, H., 19
Marx, Adrien, 82, 173
Marzials, F. T., 298
Masséna, 428
Massin, Léontine, as Nana, 203
Mathieu, Zola's dog, 123
Matrimony in France, 354, 355, 495, 536
Matthews, H., Home Secretary, 265 *et seq.*, 296, 298
Maupassant, Guy de, 63, 141, 162, 163, 167, 191, 192, 194, 262, 286, 343, 377
Mayhew, A. and J., 247, 298
Medal struck in Zola's honour, 490
Médan, Zola's house at, 168, 179, 180, 187, 207, 209, 210, 217, 218, 233, 239, 305, 392, 401, 410, 484, 504, 505, 509
Melbourne, Lord, 403
Meley, Alexandrine Gabrielle, *see* Zola, Mme. Émile
Méline, M., 445, 462
Memorial for H. Vizetelly's release, 297, 298
Memory, Zola's, 394
Mendès, Catulle, 134, 146, 158, 321
Menken, Adah I., 404
Mentality, Zola's, 394, 395, 432, 533, 534
Mercier, General, 440, 443
Meredith, George, 19
"—— Owen," 298
Mérimée, Prosper, 22, 249, 377, 404
Mermaid Series of the Old Dramatists, 253, 263
Metternich, Prince Richard, 89
Meurice, Paul, and wife, 116, 117, 118, 367
Meyer, M., 447
Michel de Bourges, 404
Michelet, 21, 66, 86, 89, 367, 374
Michon, Abbé, 90
Mignet, 26, 31
Militarism in France, 438, 441, 442, 452
Mill, J. S., 19
Millais, Sir J. E., 298
Millet, 94
Mirbeau, Octave, 389, 477, 515
Miribel, General de, 444
Mistral, the, 26, 39
Molière, 17, 18
Molloy, Fitzgerald, 298
Monet, Claude, 91, 93
Monod, Gabriel, 447, 522
Montmartre cemetery, Zola buried in, 514, 516, *et seq.*
Monument, projected, to Zola, 524
Moore, George, 178, 179, 182, 249, 250, 254, 258, 287, 288, 297, 298, 334, 340, 477, 530
Moral law, the, and great men, 402 *et seq.*
Morès, Marquis de, 427
Morley, Prof. H., 298
Morny, Duke de, 153
Mun, Count A. de, 445
Munster, Count, later Prince von, 452
Murger, Henri, 59, 60, 262
Murray, D. Christie, 448
Musset, Alfred de, 21, 43, 44, 85, 404, 451
—— Paul de, 85, 89

Nadar, M., 143, 144
Names taken by Zola in England, 466, 469, 470
Nantes, riots at, 446
Napoleon III., 20, 34, 47, 75, 86, 97, 117, 118, 125, 152, 186, 350, 351, 357, 362
—— Jérôme, Prince, 186
National Defence Delegation, French, in 1870, 127
—— Gallery, Zola at the, 334, 335

Nationalists, French, 424 *et seq.*, 452, 457, 462
National Vigilance Association, 257 *et seq.*, 263, 269, 282, 285, 287, 288
Naturalism in fiction, 159, 164, 174, 183, 184, 190, 192, 195, 203, 204, 395, 407, 530, 531
Nazon, M., 95
Nelson, 403
Newgate prison, 294
Nicholson, Brinsley, 298
Nieuwerkerke, Count A. E. de, 75
Nigra, Count, 89
Ninon, Zola's, 45; *for* "Contes à Ninon," *see* Zola, Writings
Nisard, Désiré, 47, 402
Noel, Roden, 298
Normandy, drunkenness in, 537
Norris, Frank, 531
Norwood, Zola at, *see* Queen's Hotel
Novel, the six-shilling, 249, 250

Oatlands Park Hotel, Zola at, 467, 470
Obesity, Zola cures himself of, 302
Obsequies, Zola's, 514 *et seq.*
Observation, Zola's powers of, 393
O'Connor, T. P., 298
Odelin, M., 423
Old Bailey, *see* Central Criminal Court
Olivier, Captain, 515
Orderliness, Zola's, 395
"O'Rell, Max," 298
Orleans, Prince Henri d', 438
Orson, S. W., 298
"Ouida," 298

Paiva, Viscount A. de, 185
—— La, 185
Pamplin, A. W., 469
Panizzardi, Colonel, 437, 451, 452, 463
Paris, F. Zola's scheme for fortifying, 8, 14, 15, 16, 24, 25; environs of, 60, 61; E. Zola at lectures in, 70; corruption of, 84, 85, 186, 352, 354, 536; Commune of, 127, 128, 132; markets of, 142 *et seq.*; some restaurants of, 144, 145; middle classes of, 207, 208, 354, 355; working classes of, 154, 155, 157, 159, 358; Southerners and Jews in, 420 *et seq.*, 426; anti-Semitic disturbances in, 446, 450, 453, 459; Zola's trial in 450 *et seq.*, 521; boycott of the Exhibition of 1900, 485; cohabitation without marriage in, 536. *See also* Quartier Latin
Parkinson, J. C., 247, 298
Parnassian poets, 86, 116, 129, 321
Pascal, Zola as Monsieur, 466
Passy, M., 447
Paternity and famous men, 400 *et seq.*
Pavla, 4
Pays, Mlle., 437
Pearl, Cora, 186
Peasantry, French, 230, 231, 361, 362, 381
Pellieux, General de, 436, 444, 451, 452, 453, 461
Pelloquet, T., 94
Pelletan, Eugène, 89, 119
Penn, Oatlands Chase, Zola at, 468, 470
Pentonville prison, 295
Percin, General, 513
Periodical Publications (newspapers, reviews, etc.) referred to or quoted
American:
  "New York Herald" (London edition), 258, 288
  "—— Tribune," 341
Austrian:
  "Neue Freie Presse," 8
British:
  "Athenæum," 42, 262, 381
  "Birmingham Daily Mail," 263, 267
  "Blackwood's Magazine," 243, 261
  "Bradford Observer," 268
  "Country Gentleman," 268
  "Daily Chronicle," 288, 340
  "English Illustrated Magazine," 178, 182
  "Fortnightly Review," 288
  "Globe," 267, 287
  "Guardian," 267
  "Illustrated London News," 246, 247
  "Illustrated Times," 247
  "Liverpool Mercury," 287
  "M. A. P.," 466
  "Methodist Times," 287
  "Morning Advertiser," 287
  "National Observer," 337
  "Newcastle Chronicle," 268
  "New Review," 323
  "Notts Daily Express," 263
  "Pall Mall Gazette," 248, 250, 256, 263, 330
  "—— Magazine," 466
  "People," 221
  "Piccadilly," 268
  "Pictorial Times," 246
  "Reynolds's Newspaper," 505
  "St. James's Gazette," 287, 377
  "Saturday Review," 250, 287
  "Scotsman," 265, 268
  "Scottish Leader," 268
  "Speaker," 338, 340
  "Standard," 268
  "Star," 287, 477
  "Tablet," 267
  "Times," 287, 452
  "Truth," 257
  "Weekly Dispatch," 267
  "—— Times and Echo," 316
  "Welcome Guest," 247
  "Western Daily Press," 268
  "—— Morning News," 287
  "Westminster Gazette," 432, 481
  "Whitehall Review," 267, 287
  "Wimbledon Annual," 466
French:[1]
  "L'Anti-Juif," 425
  "L'Artiste," * 103, 121

---

[1] Zola contributed to those journals which are marked with an asterisk.

Periodical Publications — *continued*
French:
"L'Aurore," * 434, 439, 445, 447, 448, 480, 481, 487, 501
"La Bibliothèque Universelle," 171
"La Cloche," * 131, 132, 133, 134
"La Croix," 512
"La Grande Revue," * 69, 100, 477
"La Lanterne," 117, 118
"La Liberté," 83
"La Libre Parole," 410, 423, 425, 511
"La Marseillaise," * Zola's, 126, 127
"La Nouvelle Revue," 189
"La Patrie," 511
"La Petite République," 445
"La République des Lettres," * 134, 158, 160
"La République Française," 198
"La Revue bleue, 63, 160
"La Revue des Deux Mondes," 160
"La Revue hebdomadaire," * 319
"La Revue illustrée," * 301, 304
"La Situation," * 101
"La Tribune," * 110, 113, 119, 123, 127, 128
"La Vie Parisienne," * 74
"La Vie populaire," * 304, 315
"La Vraie Parole," 425
"Le Bien Public," * 156 *et seq.*, 164, 170, 171, 184
"Le Corsaire," * 101, 131
"L'Eclair," 444
"L'Echo de Paris," 444
"L'Époque," 120
"L'Étendard," 120
"L'Événement," * 81 *et seq.*, 91 *et seq.*, 97, 98, 118, 151, 152; another, 107
"Le Figaro," * 63, 69, 80 *et seq.*, 98, 100, 103, 105, 118, 149, 152, 170, 171, 195, 226, 234, 315, 317, 414, 416, 429, 432, 433
"Le Gaulois," * 118, 123, 208, 511, 513
"Le Gil-Blas," * 195, 213, 218, 221, 229, 234, 310
"L'Illustration," * 99, 121
"Le Journal," * 414, 429, 460
"Le Messager de Provence," * 101, 102, 126
"Le Petit Journal," * 74, 82, 423, 450, 461
"Le Peuple Français," 120; another, 512
"Le Public," 120
"Le Rappel," * 117, 118, 121
"Le Salut Public" * (Lyons), 74, 118
"Le Sémaphore" * (Marseilles), 131, 134, 153, 157
"Le Siècle," * 124, 125, 132, 147, 156, 445, 477, 491
"Le Temps," 135
"Le Voltaire," * 159, 171, 179, 187, 188, 195, 204
Russian:
"Viestnik Yevropi," * 150, 153, 157, 164, 171, 195, 204
Perlinpinpin, *see* Pinpin
Perowne, *see* Worcester, Bishop of
Perraud, Cardinal, 307
Perrenx, M., 447, 458, 464, 465
Perrier, E., 415
Person, Zola's, 390
Petilleau, G., 326, 327, 335
Petit, Hélène, 178
Petrapoli, Antonio, 5
Philips, F. C., 298
Phillips, Alderman, 269
Photographs by Zola, 469
Picquart, Colonel, 417, 431, 437, 438, 440, 443, 451, 462, 464, 474, 483, 487, 491, 523
Pinero, A. W., 298
Pinpin, Zola's dog, 475, 476
Pipe-en-bois (G. Cavalié), 127
Piriac, Zola at, 156
Pissarro, M., 91, 95, 100
Plagiarism, charges against Zola of, 143, 170, 171, 221, 222, 414 *et seq.*
Plassans suggested by Flassans, 30, 115; *see also* Aix
Poe's Tales, 20, 246
Pollonnais, G., 513
Ponsard, 86, 112, 185
Ponson du Terrail, 87, 103
Pontbriand, M. de, 445
Pont-de-Beraud, Zola at, 33
Positivism and Zola, 502, 503
Post-mortem examination of Zola's remains, 510
Poulot, Denis, 171
Powell, Sir F. S., 265
Pressensé, F. de, 447
Prévost-Paradol, 66, 86, 98, 112
Prison Commissioners and H. Vizetelly, 295
Protestants, French, 214, 503
Proudhon, 90
Provence, Zola in, 23, 25 *et seq.*; scenery of, 40 *et seq.*
Pseudonyms, Zola's newspaper, 94, 98, 102
Pushfulness, Zola's belief in, 165

Quartier Latin, 48, 51, 54 *et seq.*, 59 *et seq.*, 100
Queen's Hotel, Norwood, Zola at, 470, 477, 480
Quènemeur, E., 12
Quiller-Couch, A. T., 338, 340
Quinet, E., 89

Rabelais, 253, 308
Raffaelli, M., 302
Ralston, W. R. S., 298
Ranc, A., 447, 453
"Rat, Le," Zola's projected novel, 430
Ravary, Major, 444
Reade, Charles, 178, 494
Reichstag, the German, declaration about Dreyfus in, 448
Reinach, Joseph, 429, 447, 462, 487
Religion, Zola's views on, 502, 503
Renan, E., 146, 177, 307, 533
Rennes court-martial on Dreyfus, 484
Renoir, M., 91
Republic, French, and Jews, 420 *et seq.*; and the Roman Church, 424, 427, 428, 436, 445, 446, 487, 499, 503, 532

Réville, M., 447
Révillon, Tony, 158
Rhys, E., 298
Ricard, Mgr. 409
—— X. de, 116
Richepin, J., 162
Robert Macaire and Rougon-Macquart, 350
Robertson, Tom, 247
Rochefort, Henri, 48, 117, 118, 120, 439,,450, 511
Rod, Édouard, 160
Rodays, F. de, 432, 433
Roman Catholic Church, the, canonizes G. B. Zola, 3; difficulties of Abbé Giuseppe Zola with, 3, 4; in relation to France, 408, 409, 416, 421 *et seq.,* 436, 445, 446, 487, 499, 503, 532, 538
Rome, Zola's visit to, 410 *et seq.*; *see also* Zola, Writings
Rosny, J. H., 234, 235
Rouen, Zola at, 193, 194
Rougon-Macquart and Robert Macaire, 350
Rousseau, Théodore, 94
Roux, Marius, 33, 70, 97, 106, 126, 146, 147,
Rovigo, Duke de, 10, 11
Russell, T. W., M. P., 265
—— W. Clark, 298

Saint Arroman, R. de, 501
—— Aubin, Zola at, 154, 218
—— Joseph, Zola's birthplace, 16, 17, 18
—— Louis, Lycée, Zola at, 47 *et seq.*; famous pupils of, 48
—— Pierre, Bernardin de, 56
Sainte-Beuve, 21, 105, 106
Sala, G. A., 178, 247, 298
Sambourne, L., 298
Sand, George, 22, 85, 161, 190, 249, 374, 389, 404; Maurice, 146
Sandeau, J., 404
Sandherr, Colonel, 433
"Sapho," Daudet's novel, 217
Sarcey, Francisque, 16, 135, 141, 160, 233, 236
Sardou, V., 84, 112
Saussier, General, 436
Savoy Hotel, Zola at, 330, 335
Schérer, E., 214
Scheurer-Kestner, M., 431, 433, 434, 442
Schneider, Colonel, 437
—— Hortense, 186
Scholl, Aurélien, 329
Schreiner, Olive, 298
Schveninger cure for obesity, 302
Schwarzkoppen, Colonel von, 433, 437, 451, 452, 463
Science, Zola's belief in, 503, 533
Scott, Sir W., 190
Sensitiveness, Zola's physical, 392, 393
Senior, W., 298
Shark, Zola called the, 308
Sharp, William, 298
Sherard, R. H., 77, 188, 207, 208, 213, 220, 232, 319
Simon, Jules, 90, 129
Singer, Dr. I., 425
Six-shilling novel, the, 249, 250
Smith, Samuel, M. P., 262 *et seq.*
Socialism, Zola and, 494
Société des Gens de Lettres and Zola, 323, 326, 329, 394
"Soil, the," translation of La Terre, publication of and proceedings against, 254, 261, 268, 269, 270, 277
Soissons, Count C. S. de, 98
Solari, M., sculptor, 33, 69, 100
Soulié, F., 22
Soult, Marshal, 11, 24, 428
Southey, R., 19
Spalding, Percy, 316, 477; Mrs., 467
Spencer, Herbert, 179
Spontaneous combustion, death by, 383
Spottiswoode, A., 246
Staff, French General, 433, 441, 442, 444, 451, 459, 462
Stage, the, Zola and, 388
Stead, W. T., 256 *et seq.,* 286
Stendhal, 22
Stephen, Sir Leslie, 298
Stephenson, Sir A. K., 271
Storey, S., M. P., 298
Story, G. W., 341
Strachey, J. St. Loe, 298
Strickland, Agnes, 19
Students, Zola's address to the Paris, 323
"Sublime, Le," Poulot's, 171
Sue, Eugène, 22, 155
Sully-Prudhomme, 116
Summerfield, Addlestone, Zola at, 469, 470
Superstitions, Zola's, 392, 400, 503, 504
Survival of Zola's memory, 529
Swinburne, A. C., 196
Symonds, J. A., 19, 298
Symons, Arthur, 298
Syndicate, alleged Jewish, 445, 454
Sylvacanne, Impasse, at Aix, Zola at, 32

Tabar, L., 91, 92
Taglioni, La, 80
Taine, H., 68, 74, 87, 98, 100, 146, 308, 395
Talmèyre, M., 222
Tanera, Captain, 317
"Tartarin of Tarascon," Daudet's, 88
Thackeray, 19, 216, 246, 283
Theatres, chiefly those at which Zola's plays, libretti, or adaptations of his novels were performed: —
    Ambigu (Paris), 159, 177, 201 *et seq.,* 219
    —— (Marseilles), 106, 107
    Châtelet, 227, 303
    Cluny, 148, 149
    Comédie Française, 75, 88, 135, 215, 225, 389
    Gymnase, 99, 148
    Odéon, 74, 88, 233, 389
    Opéra Comique, 304, 407, 498
    —— Grand, 430
    Palais Royal, 148, 168, 169
    Renaissance, 141, 142
    Théâtre Français, *see* Comédie
    —— Libre, 233, 301, 302
    —— de Paris, 233
    Vaudeville, 99

Theuriet, A., 161
Thévenot, E., 170
Thiboust, Lambert, 202
Thiers, A., 24, 26, 31, 32, 34, 131, 156
Thomson, W. M., 269, 286
Tolstoï, Count, 252, 323, 389, 519
Tornielli, Count, 452
Torse, river, 33
Toudouze, M., 146
Toulouse, Dr., on Zola, 390 *et seq.*
Tourgeneff, 141, 144, 145, 146, 147, 150, 154, 209
Toussenel on the Jews, 420, 422
Tragedy in Zola's life, 527, 528
Traill, Dr. H. D., 298
Translations of English novels in France, 283; of Zola's novels into English, 244-299, 323, 385 *et seq.*, 414, 542 *et seq.*
Trarieux, Senator, 447
Trials of Zola (Dreyfus case), *see* Paris *and* Versailles
Truro, Bishop of, 337
Turner's paintings and Zola, 335
—— F., 214, 243

ULBACH, L., 104, 105, 131, 132, 133, 172
Umberto, King of Italy, 411
"Uncle Tom's Cabin," 246
Union Générale Bank, 196, 421

VACQUERIE, Auguste, 117
—— Charles, 118
Valabrègue, A., 38, 70 *et seq.*, 73, 76, 78, 99, 101, 108, 164
Valenciennes, Zola at, 220
Vallès, Jules, 210
Vandam, Albert, 221, 229
Vaughan, Ernest, 439
—— Mr., magistrate, 286
Venables, E. G., 468
Venice, Zolas of, 2, 5, 6; É. Zola at, 412, 455; Vizetellys from, 244
Verne, Jules, 161
Véron, Dr., 82
Versailles, Zola at, 131, 132; his trials at, 461, 463, 464, 465
Vigny, A. de, 21
Vigilance Association, *see* National
Villars, Nina de, 368
Villemessant, H. de, 69, 80 *et seq.*, 88, 92, 93, 94, 97, 98, 117, 120
Vitu, Auguste, 120
Vizetelly & Co., 243 *et seq.*, 284
—— Arthur, 248, 256, 299
—— Edward Henry, 248
—— Ernest Alfred, 173, 174, 248, 250 *et seq.*, 278, 284, 285, 289 *et seq.*, 295, 313 *et seq.*, 324 *et seq.*, 334, 335, 337, 338, 410, 413, 414, 429, 445, 460, 466, 467, 469, 470, 472 to 479, 484 *et seq.*, 497, 502, 505, 515, 542 *et seq.*; Marie, wife of, 253, 313, 314, 466, 468; Victor René, son of, 474; Violette, daughter of, 468, 469, 472, 473
—— family, 244 *et seq.*
—— Frank Horace, 248, 290, 295
—— Henry Richard, 90, 243 *et seq.*, 252, 255, 256, 263, 268 *et seq.*, 284 *et seq.*, 301, 329, 340
—— James Henry, 245, 246
—— James Thomas George, 246

WALDECK-ROUSSEAU, M., 484, 487, 488, 512, 525
Walsin-Esterhazy, Major, 417, 431, 433, 435 *et seq.*, 439 *et seq.*, 448, 454, 464, 474
War of 1870, Zola during the, 125 *et seq.*
Wareham, F. W., 466 *et seq.*, 478
Watkin, Sir E. W., 298
Webster, Daniel, 403
Welldon, Rev. J. E. C., 337, 338
Wellington, Duke of, 403
Westminster Abbey, Zola at, 335
Wharton, H. T., 298
Williams, F. B., Q. C., 275, 280, 281, 282
Williamson, C. N., 298
Willis, N. P., 20
Wilson, Daniel, 234
—— H. J., M. P., 267
Wingfield, Hon. L., 298
"Winter, John Strange," 298
Wimbledon, Zola at, 466, 467
Wolf, Lucien, 336, 477
Wolff, Albert, 236
Wollstonecraft, Mary, 405
Worcester, Bishop of, 336, 337, 338
Wybouroff, M., 503

XAU, Fernand, 235, 237, 329, 414

YATES, Edmund, 247, 296, 297, 298
Young, J. Carleton, 525

ZOLA, Alexandrine, Gabrielle, *née* Mesley, wife of Emile, 100, 121, 122, 123, 125, 126, 128, 134, 135, 150, 154, 180, 202, 210, 212, 219, 240, 302, 311, 329, 332, 375, 401, 402, 412, 413, 454, 465, 469, 470, 475, 477, 478, 505 *et seq.*, 514, 522, 523
—— Benedetta, *née* Kiariaki, 5, 6
—— Canal, *see* Aix
—— Carlo, judge, 5, 6, 412
—— di Modigliana, 2
ZOLA, Emile Édouard Charles Antoine, his birth and destiny, 18; contrasted with A. Daudet, 22; taken from Paris to Aix, 24, 25; at his father's funeral, 27; his childhood, 30 *et seq.*; his animus against Aix, 30; his first school and friends, 33; studies at Aix college, 34 *et seq.*; his first literary attempts, 36; his college friends and their pranks, 39; plays the clarionet, 40; roams the country round Aix, 40 *et seq.*; his taste for poetry and his early verses, 43 *et seq.*, 51; awakes to love, 44, 45; returns to Paris, 46, 47; studies at Lycée St. Louis, 47 *et seq.*; his first "Conte à Ninon," 49; his holidays at Aix, 49, 51; ill with fever, 49; fails to secure a degree, 49, 50, 52; is employed at the Docks Napoléon, 53; is stranded in the Quartier Latin, 54 *et seq.*; his "Amoureuse Comédie," 56; his bitter poverty, 57; plans a poetic trilogy "Genesis," 57, 58; his Quartier Latin life and love

affair, 60 *et seq.*; his "Confession de Claude," 60, 61, 68, 70, 73, 76 *et seq.*; his rambles round Paris, 61 *et seq.*; plays the "Arab," 63; pawns his coat, 64; can get no work, 64; employed at Hachette's house, 64 *et seq.*; becomes acquainted with Hachette's authors, 66; chats with Taine, 67; writes various tales, 68; his verse and prose rejected by Hachette, 69; takes his mother to live with him, 69; his "band," 70; reports various lectures, 70; sells his "Contes à Ninon," 70, 71; abandons verse for prose, 71; impressed by "Madame Bovary," 72; duality of his nature, 73; early contributions to journalism, 74; writes "La Laide," a comedy, 74; his articles, "Mes Haines," 74, 96, 101; his intercourse with the Goncourts begins, 74, 109 *et seq.*; his impressions of "Henriette Maréchal," 75; is attacked by Barbey d'Aurévilly, 77; quits Hachette, 77, 78; will not be crushed by fools, 78; serves under Villemessant, 82, 83; his "Books of To-day and To-morrow," 83 *et seq.*; visits Littré and Michelet, 86; meets A. Daudet, 88; attacks Abbé Michon, 90; visits Librairie Internationale, 90, 91; meets artists and art critics, 91; criticises the Salon and champions Manet, 92 *et seq.*; stays at Bennecourt, 96, 97; writes "Le Vœu d'une Morte," 97; his "Marbres et Plâtres," 98; passes from "L'Evénement" to "Le Figaro," 98; his drama "La Madeleine," 99, 107, 301, 302; writes a definition of the novel, 99, 100; poor and in love, 100; attempts a Salon for "La Situation," 101; his "Mystères de Marseille," 101, 102, 106, 107; his "Thérèse Raquin," 102 *et seq.*; projects a book on Balzac, 108; writes for "La Tribune," 110, 113, 119, 123, 127, 128; origin of his Rougon-Macquart series, 110 *et seq.*; arranges for its publication, 114; begins "La Fortune des Rougon," 115, 123; Goncourt's allegation of his venality, 116 *et seq.*; frequents the Meurices' *salon*, 116; meets Sully-Prudhomme and F. Coppée, 116; contributes to "Le Rappel," 117, 118; his Republicanism, 118; falsity of Goncourt's charge, 119 *et seq.*; introduced to Flaubert, 121; marries Mlle. Mesley, 121; his home Rue de La Condamine, 122, 123; his difficulties with "Le Siècle," 124, 125; begins "La Curée," 125; goes to southern France, 125; is exempt from military service, 126; runs a war newspaper at Marseilles, 126; appointed secretary to Glais-Bizoin, 127; almost becomes a sub-prefect, 128, 129; his view of politics, 130; contributes to "Le Sémaphore," "La Cloche," and "Le Corsaire," 131; writes "La Curée," 132, 133, 134; his publisher failing, is reduced to dire poverty, 134; recommended by T. Gautier to G. Charpentier, 134, 135; sells the Rougon-Macquarts to Charpentier, 136 *et seq.*; is generously treated by him, 138, 139; becomes intimate with Flaubert, Tourgeneff, Daudet, and Goncourt, 140 *et seq.*; suffers from various ailments, 141, 153, 154, 195, 210, 212, 213, 218, 221, 302, 392, 393, 474, 475, 510; his play "Thérèse Raquin," 141, 142; his "Ventre de Paris," 142, 143; joins the Dinner of the Hissed Authors, 144, 145; becomes partial to good fare, 145; attacks Chateaubriand, 146; does not smoke, 146; a poor conversationalist, 147; his weekly dinners, 147; publishes "La Conquête de Plassans," 147, 148; his comedy "Les Héritiers Rabourdin," 148, 149; his home in the Rue St. Georges, 149, 150; contributes to the "Viestnik Yevropi," 150; writes his "Faute de l'Abbé Mouret," 150, 151; issues "Nouveaux Contes à Ninon," 151, 152; writes "Son Excellence Eugène Rougon," 151 *et seq.*; is eager to put everything in his books, 153; sees mice, 154; plans "L'Assommoir" at St. Aubin, 154 *et seq.*; becomes dramatic critic to "Le Bien Public," 156, 157; his income in 1876, 157; his difficulties with L'Assommoir, 157, 158; transfers it to "La République des Lettres," 158; controversy respecting his work and ideas, 159 *et seq.*; his adherents, 162, 163; is accused of self-advertisement by Flaubert, 163; his answer, 164; his belief in pushfulness, 165; writes "Une Page d'Amour," 166 *et seq.*; buys a house at Médan (q. v.), 168; his farce "Le Bouton de Rose," 168 *et seq.*; again charged with plagiarism, 170; attacks contemporary novelists, 171 *et seq.*; his pamphlet on Naturalism and the Republic, 174; is promised the cross of the Legion of Honour, 174 *et seq.*; his novel "L'Assommoir" dramatised, 177, 178; his rise to affluence, 179; his extensions at Médan, 180; his collections, 180, 181; his studies, 182; development of his reforming instinct, 182 *et seq.*, 200; writes "Nana," 185 *et seq.*; some of his short stories, 190, 191; contributes to "Les Soirées de Médan," 191; disclaims the foundation of a school, 193; deeply affected by Flaubert's death, 194; and by that of his mother, 194, 195, 210; his hypochondriacal tendency, 195, 210 *et seq.*; quits "Le Voltaire" for "Le Figaro," 195; attacks Hugo's "L'Ane," 196; assails Gambetta and defends "L'Assommoir," 196 *et seq.*; his real nature manifest in his newspaper articles, 200; assists Busnach to dramatise "Nana," 201; defends the play, 202; reissues in book form many critical and biographical papers, 203, 204; strenuousness of his life, 205; begins "La Joie de Vivre," 206; enlarges the Rougon-Macquart series, 207; writes "Pot-Bouille," 207; deems it his clearest book, 208; hears Goncourt read "La Faustin," 209; his expenditure at Médan, 209; tale of his first franc, 209; fears a sudden and violent death, 210; gives a *diner fin*, 211; writes "Au Bonheur des Dames," 212; falls seriously ill, 213; publishes "Le Capitaine Burle" and other tales, 213; finishes "Au Bonheur des Dames," 214; declining sale of his books, 215; still stage-struck, 216; advises Daudet to stand as candidate for the Academy, 216; is cheered by Daudet's companionship, 217, 218; finishes "La Joie de Vivre," 218; helps to dramatise "Pot-Bouille," 219; projects his novel "La Terre," 219; turns to "Germinal," 220; recovers physical and mental strength, 221; again accused of plagiarism, 221, 222; begins "L'Œuvre," 224; his view of some young authors, 224; is stirred by V. Hugo's death, 225; his telegram to George Hugo, 226; resents the interdiction of "Germinal" as a play, 226; writes a prefatory note to "Germinal," 227; publishes "L'Œuvre," 228, 229; begins "La Terre," 229; its purport, 231, 232; goes on a tour of investigation, 232; dramatises "Le Ventre de Paris" and "La Curée," 233; issues "La Terre" in the "Gil-Blas," 234; treats the Manifesto of the Five with contempt, 234 to 237; becomes a knight of the Legion of Honour, 238 *et seq.*; resolves to stand for the Academy and, perhaps, the Senate, 240; his works translated in England, 242 *et seq.*; his view of the failure of Christianity, 258, 259; attacked by "Blackwood's Magazine," 261; his writings denounced in the House of Commons, 263 *et seq.*; and by the British press, 267, 268; proceedings against the English translations of his works, 268 *et seq.*; H. Vizetelly's protest in his favour, 271 *et seq.*; his view of Vizetelly's first trial, 283; he produces "Le Rêve," 300, 304; he cures himself of obesity, 302; his novel "Germinal" as a play, 303; he writes "La Bête Humaine," 304, 305; tries to enter the Academy, 306 *et seq.*; writes "L'Argent," 310; and "La Débâcle," 311 *et seq.*; his first visit to Lourdes, 311; his regular intercourse with Ernest Vizetelly begins, 314; reception of his novel "La Débâcle," 317; he returns to Lourdes and visits Genoa, 318; he writes "Le Docteur Pascal," 319; is entertained on completion of the Rougon-Macquart novels, 320; extent of his writings, 322; becomes an officer of the Legion of Honour and president of the Société des Gens de Lettres, 323; is asked to London by the Institute of Journalists, 323 *et seq.*; his stay there, 329 *et seq.*; his address on anonymity in journalism, 330; at dinner with the Authors' Club, 332; sees some London sights, 334 *et seq.*; again attacked by English pharisees, 336 *et seq.*; his work to 1893 surveyed, 342 *et seq.*; his love of animals (q. v.), 365; panoramic character of his writings, 365; his researches and experience of life, 366; preparation of his novels, 369 *et seq.*; his handwriting, 373 *et seq.*; his MSS. and proofs, 375, 376; some of his errors, 376; heaviness of some of his books, 377; his view of literary "fireworks," 378; some of his good "bits," 378, 379; some of his volumes criticised, 379 *et seq.*; his private slang lexicon, 380; his connection with the stage, 388; his view of Ibsen and Tolstoï, 389; his personal appearance, 390; his hand and palmistry, 391, 392; his superstitions and *nervosité*, 392, 393, 504; his powers of observation, 393, 394; his systematic memory and mind, 394, 395, 432; he forces himself to work, 395, 396; his abstemious habits, 396, 397; routine of his life, 397; his "confession," 398; the craving of his life, 398 *et seq.*; his childless home, 400, 401; his illegitimate children, 402; perturbation in his life, 405, 406; his "Attaque du Moulin" as an opera, 407; his series "Les Trois Villes," 407 *et seq.*; his "Lourdes," 408, 409; his "Rome," 410 *et seq.*; he does not ask the Pope for an audience, 411; he is received by King Umberto, 411; visits his Italian relatives, 412; answers charges of plagiarism in "Rome," 414 *et seq.*; acknowledges help in writing his books, 415; his "Nouvelle Campagne," 416; his view of spiritism, 417; begins to defend the Jews, 417, 429; writes "Paris," and the libretto of "Messidor," 429, 430; projects a novel on ballet-girls, 430; turns to the Dreyfus case, 431; his first intervention, 432, 433; his pamphlet campaign, 434 *et seq.*; is hissed at Daudet's funeral, 434, 435; his indignation at Esterhazy's acquittal, 438; his letter "J'Accuse," 438 *et seq.*; is prosecuted for it, 445, 447 *et seq.*; his windows broken, 446; writes to Gen. Billot, 447; is sued by the handwriting experts, 448, 463, 474, 475, 476; receives expressions and testimonials of sympathy, 448; entrusts his defence to M. Labori, 449; summons a hundred witnesses, 450; his first trial (Paris), 450 *et seq.*; his address to the jury, 454 *et seq.*; he is convicted and sentenced, 458, 459; appeals, 460; publishes "Paris," 460; his conviction quashed, 461; his second trial (Versailles), 461; he answers Judet's attack on his father, 462; issues a letter to M. Brisson, 463; his third trial (Versailles), 464, 465; withdraws to England, 465; entrusts himself to Ernest Vizetelly, 466 *et seq.*; sensation created by his disappearance, 467; his homes in England, 467 *et seq.*; is suspended from the Legion of Honour, 468; begins "Fécondité," 468; his life in England, 468 *et seq.*; names he assumed there, 469, 470; some of his notes to Vizetelly, 470, 471, 472; studies English, 472; receives a strange telegram, 473; is impressed by Violette Vizetelly's dream, 473; his hope of returning to France unfulfilled, 473, 474; falls ill, 474, 475; his grief for his dog, 475, 476; execution and sale at his Paris home, 474, 475, 476; removes to Queen's Hotel, Norwood, 477; is visited by friends, 477; writes "Angeline," 477; some more of his notes to Vizetelly, 478, 479; his nervous state, 479; learns that Dreyfus is to be retried, 480; returns to France, 480; issues a manifesto, 481 *et seq.*; remains at Médan during the Rennes court-martial, 484, 485; is horrified by the verdict, 485; issues "Le Cinquième Acte," 485; refuses to write on the case for foreign journals, 485, 486; addresses a letter to Mme. Dreyfus, 486; publishes "Fécondité," 486; protests against the Amnesty, 487 *et seq.*; renounces proceedings against Judet and the experts, 488, 489; his sacrifices for the cause of Dreyfus, 489, 490; accepts a medal struck in his honour, 490 *et seq.*; turns from destructive to constructive writing, 493; his evolution towards Socialism, 494; remarks on his "Fécondité," 495; his "Travail," 496 *et seq.*; his libretto for "L'Ouragan," 499; he begins "Vérité," 499; his difficulties with that work, 500 *et seq.*; his disinterestedness, 501; his religious views, 502, 503; he rids himself of fads, 504; last weeks of his life, 504, 505; his death, 505 *et seq.*; attempts to revive him, 509; examination of his remains, 509, 510; tributes to and attacks on his memory, 511, 512; his will, 513; his obsequies, 513 *et seq.*; orations on his literary work, 516 *et seq.*; on his *rôle* in the Dreyfus case, 520 *et seq.*; his "Vérité" published, 524; projected monument in his honour, 524; his books sold, 524, 525; translation of his remains, 526; tragic elements in his life, 527, 528; survival of his memory and his writings, 528 *et seq.*; influence of his writings, 530; ✓ his apostolic fervour, 533; his prophetic instinct, 534; his projected volume "Justice," 535; his libretto for "L'Enfant Roi," 536; his measure of success, 536; estimate of his career, 538; declaration of his birth, 541; of his death, 542; English translations of his works, 542 *et seq.*

WRITINGS of ÉMILE ZOLA classified:

I. *Les Rougon-Macquart, Histoire naturelle d'une Famille sous le second Empire*

The series generally: 30, 108 *et seq.*, 114, 136 *et seq.*, 154, 167, 168, 207, 305, 320, 322, 323, 344, 348, 349, 350, 364 *et seq.*, 532

The volumes are placed below in the order in which they should be read:

1. "La Fortune des Rougon," 34, 45, 115, 124, 125, 132, 133, 136, 286, 350, 351, 382
2. "Son Excellence Eugène Rougon," 151 *et seq.*, 156, 174, 286, 351, 376, 382
3. "La Curée," 125, 130, 132 *et seq.*, 136, 286, 352, 382, 415
4. "L'Argent," 310, 315, 352
5. "Le Rêve," 240, 261, 300, 301, 304, 325, 352, 382
6. "La Conquête de Plassans," 144, 147, 148, 353, 382
7. "Pot-Bouille," 207, 208, 212, 268, 270, 354, 380
8. "Au Bonheur des Dames," 212, 213, 214, 215, 355, 415
9. "La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret," 150, 151, 286, 355, 373, 376, 382, 410
10. "Une Page d'Amour," 27, 167 *et seq.*, 170, 356, 373, 378, 382, 384, 389
11. "Le Ventre de Paris," 141 to 145, 154, 162, 286, 357, 379, 382
12. "La Joie de Vivre," 123, 155, 206, 215, 218, 286, 357, 415
13. "L'Assommoir," 154 *et seq.*, 171, 198 *et seq.*, 212, 252, 285, 358, 371, 372, 379, 536, 537
14. L'Œuvre," 58, 69, 92, 94, 122, 180, 224, 226, 228, 359, 379
15. "La Bête Humaine," 305, 306, 314, 325, 360
16. "Germinal," 220 *et seq.*, 227, 360, 379, 523, 534
17. "Nana," 45, 171, 185 *et seq.*, 189, 212, 252, 268, 353, 359, 360, 376, 380, 382

18. "La Terre," 219, 229 *et seq.*, 238 *et seq.*, 254 *et seq.*, 261, 268, 339, 361, 379, 380, 381
19. "La Débâcle," 126, 311, 312, 315 *et seq.*, 362, 376, 379, 380
20. "Le Docteur Pascal," 261, 311, 318, 319, 320, 363, 379, 382 *et seq.*, 405, 406, 415
II. *Les Trois Villes*
The series generally: 407, 408, 494
1. "Lourdes," 311, 318, 327, 407 to 410, 532
2. "Rome," 376, 407, 408, 410, 411, 413, 414, 416, 532
3. "Paris," 153, 375, 407, 408, 429, 460, 489, 535

III. *Les Quatre Évangiles*
The series generally: 468, 493, 497, 498
1. "Fécondité," 405, 406, 416, 468, 469, 477, 480, 484, 486, 489, 490, 495
2. "Travail," 406, 496 *et seq.*, 534
3. "Vérité," 416, 498 *et seq.*, 504, 505, 524, 532
4. "Justice," 504, 535

IV. *Other Novels*
"La Confession de Claude," 60 *et seq.*, 68, 70, 73, 76 *et seq.*, 344
"Madeleine Férat," 107, 110, 113, 302, 344
"Les Mystères de Marseille," 101, 102, 126, 344
"Thérèse Raquin," 102 *et seq.*, 107, 110, 344, 381
"Le Vœu d'une Morte," 97, 98, 344

V. *Tales*
"Angeline," 477
"Le Capitaine Burle" and other stories, 213, 233, 343
"Contes à Ninon" and "Nouveaux Contes à Ninon," 33, 45, 49, 55, 62, 63, 68 *et seq.*, 99, 118, 151, 155, 342, 343
"Naïs Micoulin" and other stories, 190, 221, 343
"Nantas," 190, 343
"Pour une Nuit d'Amour," 343
"Soirées de Médan" ("L'Attaque du Moulin"), 163, 191 *et seq.*
"La Vierge au Cirage," 73

VI. *Plays and Libretti*
"L'Assommoir," 171, 177, 224
"L'Attaque du Moulin," 191, 407
"Au Bonheur des Dames," adapted by St. Arroman, 501
"Le Bouton de Rose," 168 *et seq.*, 202, 388
"Enfoneé le Pion," 36
"L'Enfant Roi," 536
"Germinal," 226, 303
"Les Héritiers Rabourdin," 144, 148, 149
"Jacques Damour," by Hennique from Zola's tale, 233
"La Laide," 74

VI. *Plays and Libretti* — continued
"La Madeleine," 99, 107, 301, 302
"Messidor," 430
"Les Mystères de Marseille," 106, 107
"Nana," 201 *et seq.*
"L'Ouragan," 498
"Pot-Bouille," 219
"Renée" ("La Curée"), 233
"Le Rêve," 304
"La Terre," by St. Arroman and Hugot from Zola's novel, 501
"Thérèse Raquin," 141, 142, 144
"Tout pour l'Honneur," by Céard from "Le Capitaine Burle," 233

VII. *Verse*
"L'Amoureuse Comédie," 56, 69
"Genèse," 57, 58, 111
Various, 43, 45, 49, 51, 55, 56, 57, 58

VIII. *Critical and Political Writings, etc.*
"Nos Auteurs dramatiques," 204
"Une Campagne: 1880-1881," 195
"Nouvelle Campagne: 1896," 416, 417
"Documents Littéraires," 204
"Mes Haines" (contains "Mon Salon"), 74, 96
"Livres d'aujourd'hui et de demain," 83 *et seq.*
"Le Naturalisme au Théâtre," 204
"La République et la Littérature," 159, 174
"Retour de Voyage," 317
"Le Roman Expérimental," 159, 174, 183, 184, 195, 203
"Les Romanciers Naturalistes," 204
"La Vérité en Marche" (Dreyfus case), 6, 9, 434; *the pamphlets, letters, and articles reproduced in this volume, as well as others, are quoted or referred to on pages* 432, 434, 435, 438 *et seq.* (J'accuse), 447, 462, 463, 480 *et seq.*, 485, 486, 487
For references to various uncollected newspaper articles by Zola see Periodical Publications: "La Cloche," "La Marseillaise," "La Situation," "La Tribune," "La Vie Parisienne," "Le Corsaire," "L'Événement," "Le Figaro," "Le Gaulois," "Le Petit Journal," "Le Rappel," "Le Salut Public," "Le Sémaphore"
For a list of English translations of *his books, see* Appendix
ZOLA, Emma, Signora Fratta, 6
—— Francesco, otherwise François, father of Émile, his birth and early military service, 6; becomes an engineer, 7; his horse railway in Austria, 8; his travels; his plans for fortifying Paris, 8, 14 *et seq.*, 24, 25; serves in the French Foreign Legion, 8 *et seq.*; his memory

attacked, 9 *et seq.*, 29, 461, 462, 488; established at Marseilles, 13; some of his schemes there, 13, 14; plans the Aix canal, 15, 25 *et seq.*; his appearance, 15; his marriage, 15, 16; his Paris home, 16 *et seq.*, his death, 27; his grave and memory, 28, 29
Zola, Françoise Émilie, mother of Émile, 15 *et seq.*, 25 *et seq.*, 29, 32 *et seq.*, 46, 47, 52, 54 *et seq.*, 69, 123, 126, 128, 154, 195, 210
Zola, Giovanni Battista, Jesuit, 2, 3
—— Giuseppe, Abate, 3, 4
—— Marco, engineer, 5
—— Name of, 1, 2
—— Predosa, 2
Zolas, Brescian and Venetian, 2 *et seq.*, 6
Zurlinden, General, 474

BINDING SECT. JUL 26 1977

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

PQ
2528
V6

Vizetelly, Ernest Alfred
Emile Zola, novelist and reformer